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SABOTEUR

Enter warehouse. Avoid dogs, guards, and ceiling-mounted anti-personnel weapons which are guided by video cameras. Cross to other side of the warehouse. You may have to use some computer terminals to unlock doors (not at skill level 1 though). Go down sewers. On your journey you should try to find a hidden time-bomb and carry it to the underground computer centre. Use two mini-trains which connect sewers to computer centre. Take (or swap time-bomb with) the disk, then escape by helicopter which is in the roof of the warehouse, (you'll have to climb the stanchions and jump across the gantries on the top floor - don't be frightened of jumping-off a screen.)



SABOTEUR II

You take the role of the Ninja's beautiful sister, who must avenge her fatally wounded brother. In "SABOTEUR I" he broke into the central security building and stole a computer disk that contained names of the rebel leaders. This disk also held information about the dictator's huge missile silo. Your night-time mission is to hand-glide into this high security complex of buidings and underground passages (over 700 screens), search for the pieces of punched computer tape that control the missile's flight path, redirect it before blast-off, then escape by motorbike down the one and only exit tunnel. The site is guarded at night by massive android guards with flame-throwers, vampire bats, and deadly black pumas.



SIGMA 7

Take-off from your base and fly to the next factory fighting your way through the space-mine defences as you go. The distance between the space stations and the number of space-mines increases with each new stage. Bonus points are awarded for destroying complete waves of mines. Once into the factory area, the player must move around clearing the pathways. Defence robo-mines rapidly home-in to kill simply by making contact, though they may be shot first. As the paths are cleared a pattern of fixed markers is revealed. This pattern MUST BE MEMORISED and subsequently entered on the control unit. Score is awarded for destroying robo-mines, and the points are shown over the explosions. Bonus points are awarded in proportion to the area of pathway cleared. If the time limit is exceeded (ie: the counter at the top left of the screen reads zero) then all remaining "lives" are lost and the game ends.



CRITICAL MASS

Keep flying towards the right of your screen. Avoid all rocks and mines. Watch out for incoming aliens and shoot to kill, but don't waste energy. If your craft gets destroyed, then use your jet-pack and follow the pointer at the bottom of the screen till you find a new ship in a replacement pod (just land on the small round pad next to it). When you come to the wall move up the screen, wait for and then shoot the robot guard, then keep moving (to avoid the guided plasma bolts) and shoot the turret in the middle of the two force gates, then move through quickly. When you get to the anti-matter converter fly in reverse (this gives you retro-thrust) then spin around and shoot the prism-shaped energy concentrator just as it is taking-in energy, before you get sucked-in and vapourised.



AIRWOLF

As Stringfellow Hawke, a former Vietnam chopper pilot, and the only man in the free world trained to fly the billion-dollar helicopter 'AIRWOLF' you have been assigned a dangerous rescue mission by the FIRM. Five important U.S. scientists are being held hostage deep in a subterranean base beneath the scorching Arizona desert. As Hawke, you must guide AIRWOLF using full stealth capabilities, on a series of perilous night-time missions and bring about the release of each scientist in turn. Only destruction of the defence control boxes strategically positioned within the cavern will allow AIRWOLF to descend to the heart of the base where the scientists are held.



DEEP STRIKE

You are in control of a World War I fighter. Your job is to protect and guide a flight of four bombers to take out an enemy fuel dump and barracks. You may then land and refuel before heading out once again. Keep your compass pointer vertical or you will run into heavy flak and also run out of fuel. Shoot down all planes EXCEPT for your own bomber which will fly dead ahead of you. Avoid barrage balloons. If one of your bombers gets hit a replacement will fly in after a few seconds. Bomb anything you like. If you can stay on course and survive long enough you should eventually pass over the enemy fuel dumps which you must wipe out.



COMBAT LYNX

You will have four bases which you must support with troops and air cover. Base 1 has an endless supply of fuel and weapons, and the ability to instantly revitalise injured troops brought back from the other bases. All the bases start with 30 fully equipped soldiers. Allied land vehicles move around the battlefield independently of your control. You provide the only allied air support. Enemy land vehicles will slowly converge on your bases unless stopped by the allied land vehicles, by mines that you have dropped, or by the other weapons of your COMBAT LYNX helicopter.



TURBO ESPRIT

An armoured supply car is carrying drugs to the centre of the city. One after the other, four delivery cars will drive in to meet it, and then drive off to their hide-aways. After the fourth pick-up the armoured supply car will leave the city. Your mission is to stop the delivery cars after they have made their pick-ups and before they disappear in their hide-aways, and to stop the armoured supply car after it has passed its drugs to the last car and before it leaves the city. You will score extra points for catching the drug smugglers alive, rather than shooting them. Your vehicle will be a Lotus Turbo Esprit capable of driving at 150 mph.



THANATOS

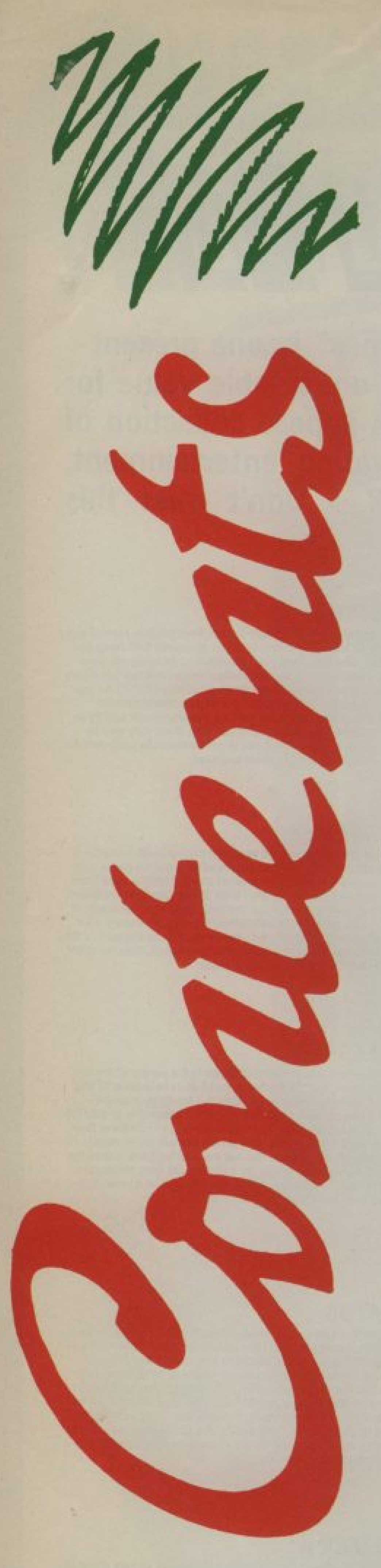
Fly till you get to a castle, then land and walk up to castle gate. Use flame from close range to burn down the gate. If you run out of flame, go back and find a witch tied between two stakes and eat her. Watch out for the knight on horseback who will try to lance you unless you first knock him off his horse with your claws. Eating the witch will refill your energy. In the first castle land near the girl and allow her to climb onto your back. Fly onto the next castle. When you find the book of spells, land and let the girl collect them. Fly to the last castle where you will find the cauldron in which the girl can cast her spell. Land nearby.



BOMBJACK II

Watch Out! Jack's back! Our superhero Bombjack is here again in comic caper of the tactical kind! This time, armed and deadly - ready for combat. Use the stab key to fight your way through the reptile infested lava pit and on into outer-space. Have you got what it takes? Have you got the mental agility to outwit the enemies and collect the treasure in over 40 fiendishly complicated settings? Collect them in the right order and get a bonus Jack.

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News & Reviews

C+VG team

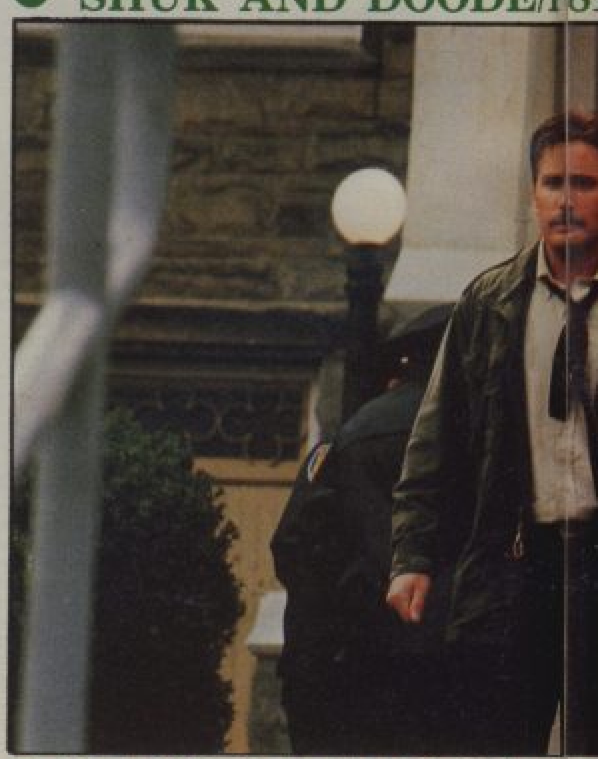
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● XENON — THE FIRSTH



● SHUK AND DOODE/P81



● STAKE OUT/BIG SCREE

Contents

Inside Story

You are holding a piece of computer game history. The launch of Xenon for the ST and Amiga heralds the arrival of coin-op quality games to play at home. All the sounds, explosions and speed of those games housed in vast cabinets are now beginning to be captured on 2½" disks. Read all about it and marvel at the screen shots. If you haven't got the dosh for a 16bit mega machine, don't despair. We've got stacks for the Spectrum, 64, Amiga, ST, and games consoles. *Afterburner* hits the shops on the Sega System, *Platoon* is mapped and hinted, and *Thunder-blade* raises gasps of astonishement at the recent Amusement Trade Exhibition.

All this plus a chance to win a remote controlled plane, a 19 Survival Kit, Eye goodies and Shuk and Doode cause havoc on the London undergrond.

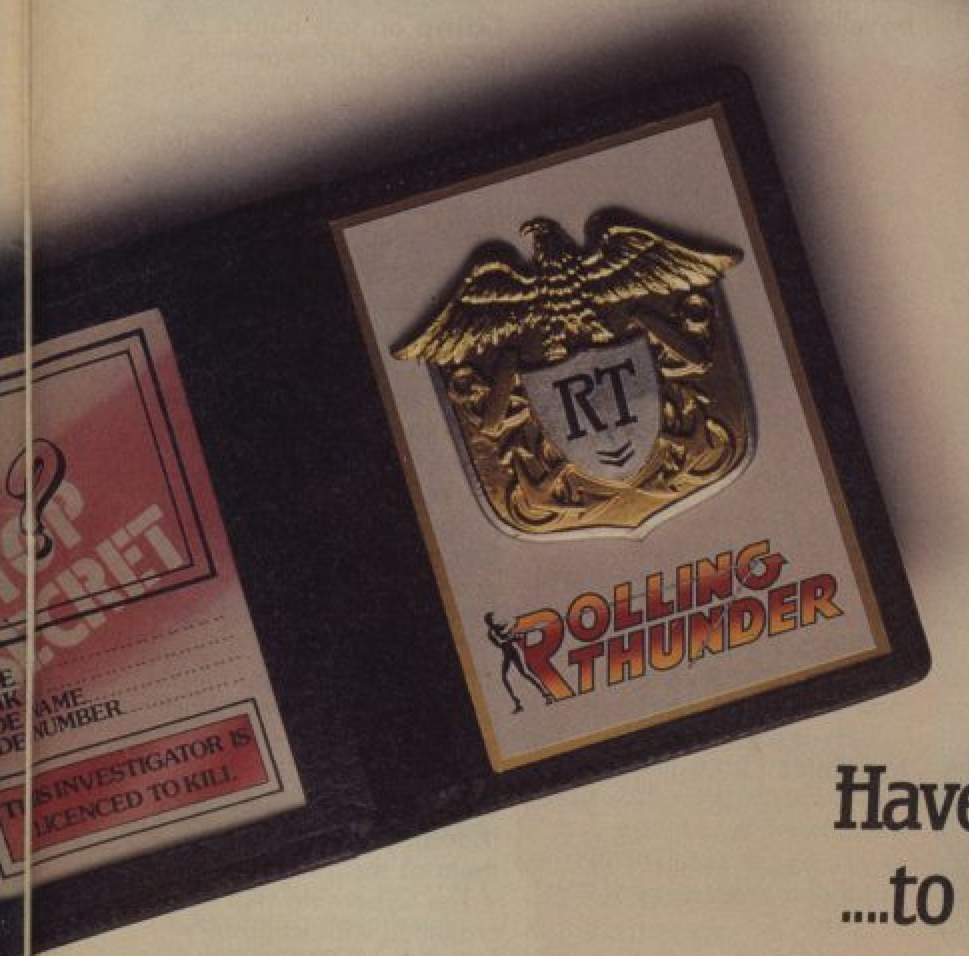
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Atlantis game surfaces

■ Get any eyeful of this pixel-pulsating temptress out to lure you into buying **Return to Atlantis,** a new graphic adventure out in March from **Electronic Arts.**

As an agent for The Foundation you have 14 missions to complete in your search for the legendary city of Atlantis. Each mission is a game in itself, taking the player to waters of exotic international locales, from the Baltic to the Caribbean to the South Pacific.

The flying ship, Viceroy, contains an impressive assortment of hi-tech tools to help in the completion of the missions, including a rather emotional robot RUF (Remote Underwater Friend) and ART, a shipboard computer.

Return to Atlantis will cost £24.95 on the Amiga.



Infocomix launch BLUBBERMAN

■ Fancy reading a comic on your computer? Well that's the novel idea from **Infocom.**

Each of the **Infocomix** will, it is claimed, provide four to five hours entertainment. There is no game play as such but the player — or rather, reader — will be able to choose their own path through the labyrinth of intertwinning storylines and see the plot from various character viewpoints.

The first three releases — which will be handled in this country by **Activision** — will be **Lane Mastadon vs The Blubberman,** a spoof on 1930's science fiction; **Gamma Force in Pit of a Thousand Screams,** a superhero tale featuring three aliens; and **Zorkquest: Assault on Egreth Castle;** a fantasy adventure about a group of travellers who are manipulated by an evil magician.

The price of Infocomics, which will be released on Commodore 64/128 and IBM, has yet to be announced.

Sweet Heart Launch

■ **Blood Valley, Gremlin's** game based on the fighting fantasy books of the same name, is now set for release on all formats on February 14. That means it should be in the shops now. Our picture is from the Atari ST version.



N,N,NOT yet

■ Don't expect to see **Cascade's 19—Boot Camp** on sale before Easter because of programming delays.

Hewson's spring!

■ The word from the herd is that **Hewson's** new shoot 'em up, **Cybernoid — The Fighting Machine,** is hot and the blast-off date is set for early March.

It is written by programmer **Raffaele Cecco,** author of **Exolon** and **Equinox.** This shot is from the Spectrum version.

Plasma pulsers, position disrupters and mega missiles are just a few of the attack vehicles which planet-hopping space pirates fling at your bristling Cybernoid. In turn, you blast to relieve them of their ill-gotten gains.

The Cybernoid ship is crammed with weaponry including drop bombs,

Bosconian—The Bedroom Version.

■ Imagine owning your own coin-op machines. For most people it's just a dream. But sometimes that dream comes true . . . with a little help from C+VG.

Thousands of you entered our competition to win Manco's **Bosconian** coin-op, provided by **Mastertronic** who are converting the game to the home micro.

In our November issue we printed the Bosconian game scenario and asked you to come up with an illustration to fit the story.

C+VG Art Editor **Craig Kennedy** was quickly submerged in envelopes, packages and parcels as the entries poured in. It was a tough choice but Craig eventually picked **Toby Glover,** of Child's Hill, London, as winner. And believe it or not this was Toby's first try at entering any art competition.

C+VG's **Lesly Walker** and **Mandy Hamilton-Jones,** from Mastertronic, delivered the machine to Toby's home. Imagine taking that on the bus!

Mandy said of Toby's artwork: "It was terrific. I was very impressed."

Toby is pictured with Mandy and his winning entry. For a better look at the artwork turn to the centre pages of this month's issue where we've used it as a poster.








GO DAX - ARE GO!!

■ Go-Dax Software held its launch party last month at the Institute of Directors in London claiming that their watch word was to be 'innovation'.

It was slightly surprising in view of this claim that the firm's first two releases were to be two coin-op clones for the BBC computers in the shape of **Kourtyard** and **Skirmish.**

Go-Dax expect their **Gauntlet** and **Joust** clones to vie with each other for the number one slot in the BBC Charts.

Making much more of a legitimate claim for innovation is an interesting but so far unnamed game that links computers together in an arcade/strategy combat challenge.

Set on an island, the game will allow up to sixteen players each playing on his own computer to battle for supremacy of the terrain.

Alliances can be built and broken. The players, who drive around the scrolling landscape in takes, can also lay mines, shell opponents, and colonise the producer 'dumps' that are the keys to controlling large areas.

The network game is being coded by two Cambridge University hackers who are developing the game initially on the BBC Model B. It is expected to also appear on the ST, Amiga and Archimedes.

The details of its net-working mechanism have not yet been confirmed but it is believed to be based on a simple 'jack' that can be purchased in high street electrical stores. More news soon.



horizontal beamers, climber balsters, mines, shields and the lightning wizardry of the lazer bouncers. Bolt-on bits include cannons, battering rams and generators.

It will be out on Spectrum 48/128K (£7.95), Amstrad CPC and Commodore 64/128K £9.95 and £14.95.

Carrier Command Delayed!

■ **Carrier Command** will now not appear until the end of February at the earliest due to what the Rainbird describes as a "programming hitch", despite an advertisement in last month's *C+VG* claiming that the game was "available now".

Company spokesperson Clare Edgeley told *C+VG*: "We have written to all of the people who sent off for the game explaining the reasons for the delay and stating that we would not cash any cheques until the game had been dispatched."

Customers are being given the option to receive their cheques back and send off for the game at a later date.

LESS from Ocean!!

■ **Ocean** is cutting the number of new titles it will release this year to around 24 — that's nearly a third down on 1987.

But more resources will be devoted to each game, Ocean boss **David Ward** announced at a recent press launch for **Platoon.**

He also announced Ocean will be launching a new label this year called **Special FX.** Its first release will be a game called **Firefly.**

Meanwhile new up and coming Ocean releases include **Target Renegade** and **Robocop,** the game based on the smash film.

Roadwarrior

■ **CRL** is determined to keep death ON the road with the release of **Road Warrior** next month.

The game plan sounds a bit like *Death Wish* on wheels. You play the part of a knight of the highway on a mission to clean the punks, thugs and other undesirables who infest your part of the world. There are various weapons to collect en route.

This screen shot is from the Commodore 64.



Grovel.

■ Okay, it's apology time. In last month's review of **Outrun** we printed a picture which implied the game had a split-screen facility. Well, as the many thousands of you who have bought the game know, it doesn't. By the time the picture was spotted it was too late to do anything about it.

Sorry to all concerned.

Rim Runs Late

■ **Rimrunner,** designed by the man behind **Barbarian — the Ultimate Warrior** Steve Brown, is now set for a mid-March release by **Palace Software.**

It's a shoot 'em up set against a multi-plane scrolling landscape where you control an insectoid warrior on perimeter patrol. His mission is to protect against an invasion from deadly Arachnoids.

The Commodore 64, Amstrad and ST versions will be out first with Spectrum following soon afterwards.

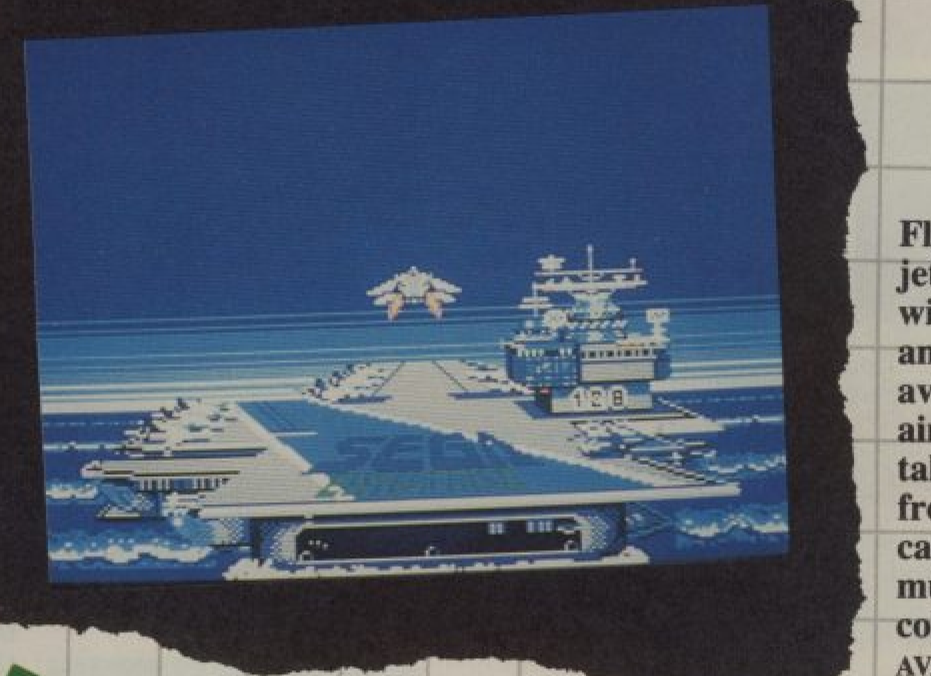
Meanwhile, Steve and his team are working on **Barbarian II.**

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The famed arcade hit ZAXXON can now be enjoyed in the privacy of your home in 3-D scope. Evade obstructive walls and the laser barrier. Advance – onward to destroy the enemy – Requires 3-D glasses.

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Screen shot taken from arcade machine.

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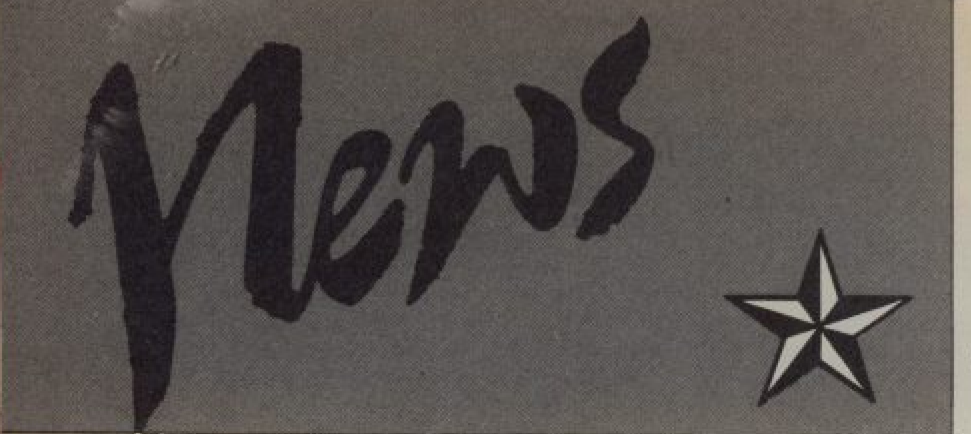


This exciting strategic space fighting game will require you to rescue your comrades from an alien spaceship, requires lots of skill.

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Viva Las Vegas!

If you want to know what's going to be hot Stateside this spring then the *Winter Consumer Electronics Show* held in *Las Vegas* is the place to visit. *C+VG's* jet-lagged deputy editor *Paul Boughton* reports from the neon nightmare of the entertainment capital of the world.

Forget the Atari ST and junk the Amiga — the video game consoles are hotter than hell in the US of A right now. At the **Winter Consumer Electronics Show** in Las Vegas it was **Nintendo** and **Sega** grabbing all the attention.

Most of the other software houses preferred hotel suites to display their new games to the trade.

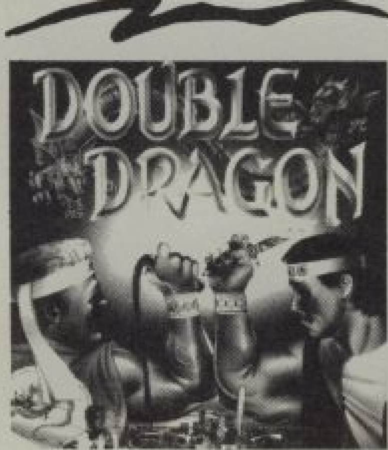
In America, unlike Britain, it's Nintendo who are leaders of the pack, with an estimated 5.5 million machines sold, followed by Atari, Sega and Intelevision. But within the next few months Nintendo is gearing up for an assault on Sega's UK crown.



▲ *Paul "Bruiser" Baughton gets what he deserves!*

So here are the games heading your way soon. Heading the list is **Mike Tyson's Punch-Out.** You take on various boxers in a series of challenge matches before taking on Iron Mike, undisputed heavyweight champion of the world.

Other UK launches are **The Adventure of Link, Kid Icarus, Metroid** and **The Legend of Zelda** (in Nintendo's adventure series) and in the sports series, **Rad Racer** — an **Out Run** lookalike — **Pro-Wrestling, Slalom** and **Volleyball.**



▲ *Double Dragon.*

Meanwhile Nintendo had lined up an impressive range of third party games makers who are preparing product for the Nintendo. So make a note to look out for **Double Dragon,** the arcade classic from **Tradwest,** Capcom's **Gun Smoke, 1942, 1943 Commando, Ghost'n'Goblins, Trojan** and **Bionic** and **Commandos Legendary-Rings, Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom.**

And the hits keep coming — SNK's **Alpha Mission, Athena, Ikari Warriors I and II:** LJN's **The Karate Kid and Jaws.**

Acclaim, who pat out Epyx's **Winter Games** on the Nintendo, will soon release **Rambo,** based on the Stallone film.

Sega plans to release around 40 titles in the US, the hottest of which will probably be **After Burner**, (see Tony Takoushi's exclusive review).

Generally the 16-bit software on display was disappointing, to say the least. There was nothing which took your breath away — with one exception. That was **Rocket Ranger** from **Cinemaware,** to be released in this country this spring by **Mirrorsoft.** Cinemaware is well known for its brilliant graphics — remember **Defender of the Crown, King of Chicago and Sinbad** — but has been a little suspect on game play.

The signs are that with **Rocket Ranger** everything has come right. The game has the feel of *Indiana Jones* meets Flash Gordon, packed with action, thrills, spills and romance.

It's a tale of time travel, evil Nazis, mind control machines, a jet-propelled rocket suit and the beautiful active daughter of a brilliant scientist.



▲ *Rocket Ranger.*

Cinemaware also has what must be one of the oddest games out — **The Three Stooges,** based on the ancient American clowns. Curly, Larry and Mo. the game, described as a tribute to the Stooges, involves the clowns trying to raise money to stop an orphanage closing. The graphics are brill, as usual, but the whole concept seems a little odd.

First there was Major Bill Steeley of **Microprose,** now meet "Colonel Jack" Rosenow. He's the ex-USAF pilot to provide the strategy and flight techniques action behind **Action Soft's** helicopter flight simulation **Thunderchopper.** The simulation — 3D graphics by Sub-Logic — allows you to learn simple landing techniques or fly the most dangerous combat missions.

Electronic Arts goodies include **Interceptor,** which gives the player the choice of two fighter planes, the F-18 Hornet and F-16 Falcon, and the choice of six combat missions.

New US releases also include **Ferrari Formula One, The Bard's Tale** II and III: **The Destiny Knight** and **Thief of Fate** and **Return to Atlantis,** a graphic adventure with 14 undersea missions.

Aracadia's coin-up **Aaargh!** is out on Amiga Stateside from **EA** and should be heading this way soon from **Melbourne House.** It takes over where **Rampage** leaves off.

Meanwhile **Epyx** is to market three **US Gold** titles in America — **Street Cat, Metrocross** and the mysterious **Dive Bomber** which has yet to see the light of day in Britain.

Dive Bomber puts you in the seat of a World War Two torpedo bomber based on the aircraft carrier, Ark Royal, with a search and destroy mission for U-Boats, E-Boats, aircraft and the battleship Bismark.



▲ *Three Stooges.*

Meanwhile Epyx will release **The Games: Winter Edition** to tie in with this year's Winter Olympics. Sports include skating, ski-ing and five other events.

Other new Epyx releases coming are **4X4 Off Road Racing,** a sort of **Out Run** over dirt tracks, with the facility to construct your own car.

And the long-awaited follow up to **Impossible Mission** is on its way. The originally named **Impossible Mission II** puts you in a high-tech office run by an evil tyrant. It's packed with codes, puzzles, guards, mined hallways and bombs. It looks a winner.

SPECTRUM

CASSETTE £7.95 | +3 DISK £14.95

COMMODORE

CASSETTE £8.95 | DISK £12.95



BEAT THE SYSTEM . . . Now for the crew of **FIREFLY** there is no home – just a desperate mission to eliminate the mechanoid army which has colonised the solar system.

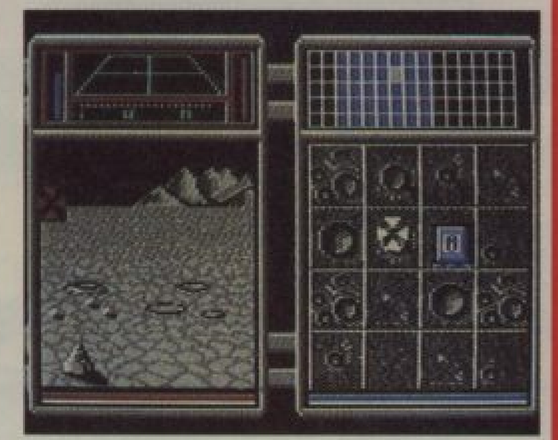
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Street Scene

New in March is *The Corporation* from Activision, a yuppie space adventure where earning a positive credit rating and gaining promotion are just as important as blowing away your rivals. The set up is that familiar old future where big firms have taken over from countries, and two rival superpower corporations fight it out.

You play the commander of a robot team mining an obscure asteroid for the rare and valuable "Minorthian Crystal". It's not as easy as all that though, as a rival team from the enemy corporation is also after the same precious stuff, and will stop at nothing to get it! Just to add to your worries, they've stacked the deck against you by having the very asteroid you are sitting on rushing towards certain doom.

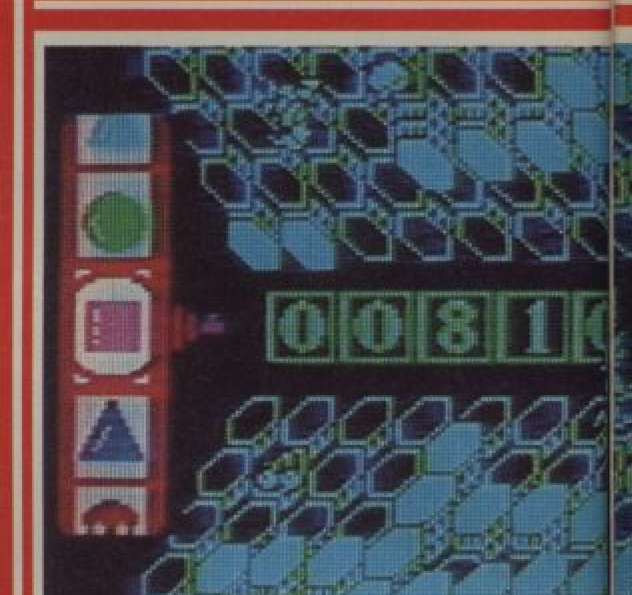
The game is packed with rocket launchers, meteor showers and that old favourite, the cloaking device.



With upward mobility the name of the game these days, it would seem a good time to release an adventure where salary counts as much as firepower, though only time will tell as to whether the financial aspects add another dimension to the adventure, or get in the way of it.

Remember, it's not just your life . . . it's your career that's at risk!

Okay, it's time to put the cards on the table. This is *Card Sharks*, the Accolade game coming from Electronic Arts. You get a choice of games to play, including blackjack and poker. These shots are from the Commodore 64. EA will start dealing the game to you in March.



The *Shoot 'Em Up Construction* set got the Palace off-shoot label Outlaw off to a flying start. It was a quality product. Their next offering is *Troll*, an arcade shoot-'em-up set in a weird world of mirrored images.

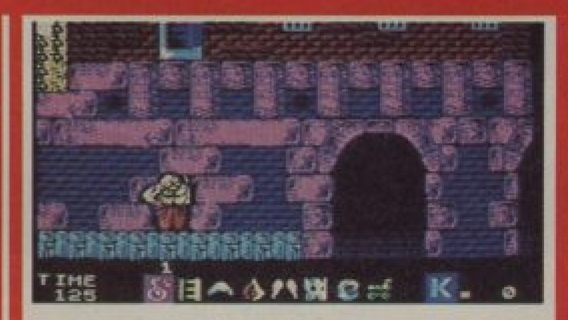
Designed and programmed by Denton Designs, *Troll* is set in the netherworld of Narc. You are on your own against hordes of fiendish goblins whose only pleasure in life is to send you crashing through one of their



You won't believe your eyes but this is the Commodore 64 version of *Ikari Warriors*. Gasp! Now that you've recovered from the shock, prepare yourself for another one. Elite are actually going to release it!

Not bad when you consider the Amstrad version came out way back in January '87. Remember *C + VG's* brilliant map? Well the game follows the same format. It's you against the world on a mission to rescue prisoners-of-war, battling it out with the enemy, blasting away with tanks, mortars and the like. The game is being "tweaked" at the moment but initial play testing suggests it will be a goodie.



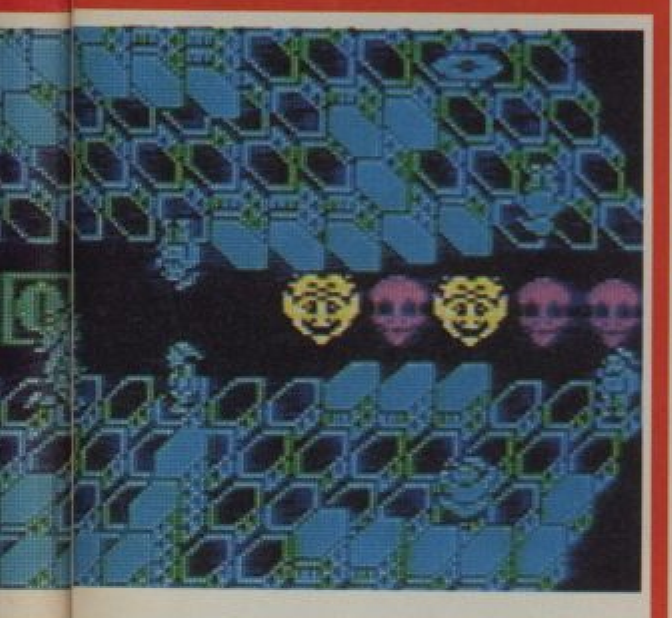


Calling all comrades. This is *Karnov*, Electric Dreams' conversion of the Data East coin-op. In it you play a fire-breathing Russian searching for the lost treasure of Babylon.

These shots are from the Spectrum version and the signs are that ED has done a good job on capturing the look of the coin-op but it's too early for a verdict on playability.

The game spans over nine levels in which Karnov faces dragons, deadly ostriches and killer biscuits! Game play involves running, jumping, climbing and flying. Karnov on the Spectrum, Commodore 64 and Amstrad is set for release at the end of March.





holes into another dimension.

You must fight off the goblins and use your own supply of escape-holes to jump through the floor to new locations in the search for the means of your escape. At the same time keep an eye on the great wheel of fortune and watch out for the goblins above longing to drop a death-hole over an unwary Troll.

Troll will be available in the early spring for the Commodore 64, Spectrum and Amstrad.

New software house destiny, headed by Francis Lee, the ex-Beyond and Starlight chief, releases it's first titles this month, *Teladon* and *Yeti*, both on the Spectrum.

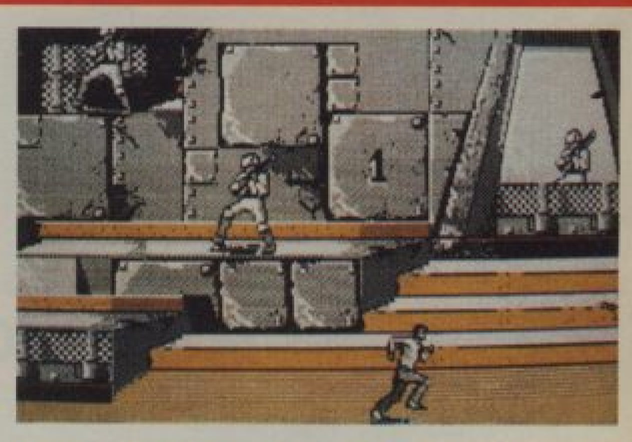
Teladon, written by Nick Eatock, author of Greyfell and Sorderon's Shadow, is a shoot 'em up with survival as the main aim.

Yeti, is arcade adventure in the snow covered mountains in the Himalayas, in a quest for the mythical snow beast.

The price of both games is £8.95.

Remember *Prohibition* from Infogrames, the gangster shoot 'em up released last year? Well the French company has rehashed that basic idea — moving a gunsight around to pick off bad guys hiding in and around buildings — and come up with *Lee Enfield.* This game is the first of what promises to be a series about this "Time Troubleshooter".

Lee, who apparently has time travel down to a fine art, zips off to the 22nd Century, to rescue his old pal Bill, who is being held by someone or something known as the Yellow Shadow. Quick reaction and a sure shot eye will be essential. Out soon on the Atari ST — from which this screen shot comes — Amstrad and PC.



Welcome to *Frightmare,* where bad dreams come true and a good night's sleep is unheard of. This is the dead zone where all fears, terrors and phobias are real. So close your eyes and enter Cascade's world of uneasy sleep.

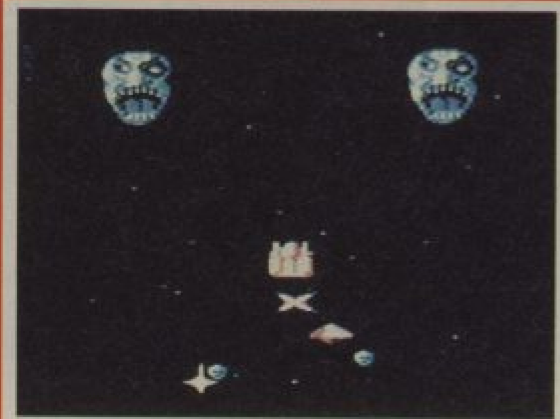
There are four dream worlds to explore, each more terrifying than the last, and you've got eight and a half hours before you wake up again. That's if you survive.

For you will face skulls, spiders, hooded figures, ghosts, bats and grasping hands, serpents, zombies and even Satan. But you can collect weapons to fight back — such as holy water, a watch to slow the evil creatures of the night down, a crucifix and revolver. You score by shooting monsters, and picking up chalices.

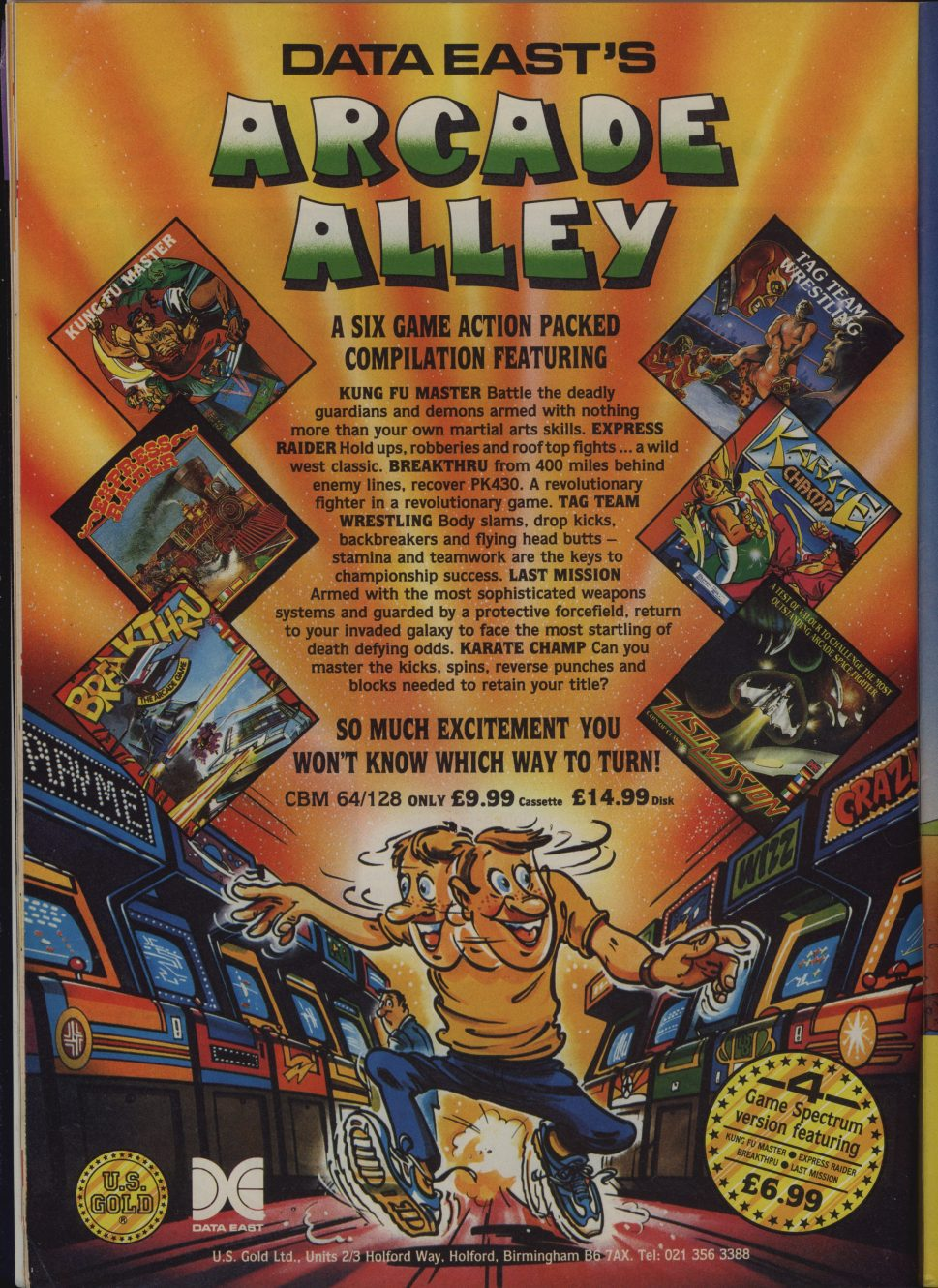
Don't go to sleep or you could miss the game.







Databyte, best known for its American imports — particularly the *Spy Vs Spy* series — has ventured into Europe for its next release, *Task III.* It's a space shoot 'em up set across 16 levels of play with alien ships to destroy and "deadly" traps to avoid. *Task III* will be released on the Commodore 64 at £9.95 cassette, and £14.95 disk.



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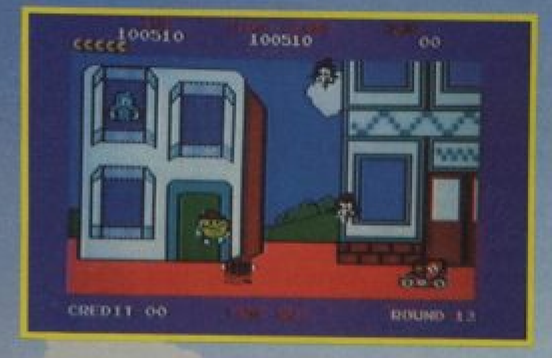
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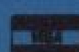
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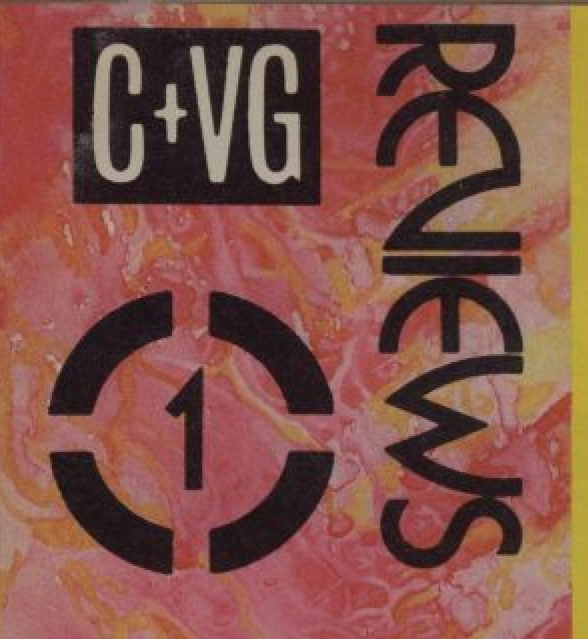
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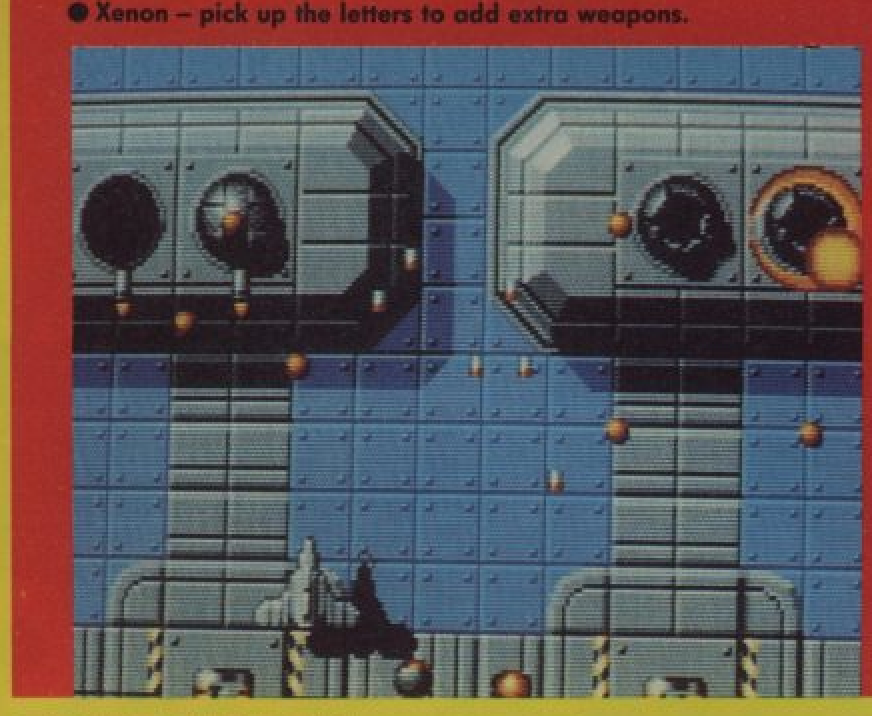
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● Xenon – pick up the letters to add extra weapons.



● Blast your way through th

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- ▶ VERSIONS TESTED: ST/AMIGA
- ▶ REVIEWER: EUGENE LACEY

The launch of *Xenon* represents that rare and special thing in the computer games world – something completely new and important.

OK, I know what you're thinking. A scrolling shoot-'em-up with metallic effects where you build your weaponry by picking up letters . . . new?

Yes, that's exactly what I mean, it is new. New because after years of software houses telling you that you can "take the coin op home with you" *Xenon* is the first game that really looks and feels like a coin-op. Not a state of the art bells and whistles coin-op *a la Afterburner* – but certainly a reasonable blaster that you wouldn't think twice about pumping a few ten pences into if you got rained on at the sea side.

Xenon is also new because it is the first game to be launched as a home game and a coin-op simultaneously. I must admit I was a little worried about this. Just imagine it – you are blasting away trying to get onto the next level (not easy in this game, believe me) when you decide you have had enough. Right, that's it, and you pop down to the pub. No sooner are you through the door when you clock a new coin-op bleeping away – there's literally no escape from *Xenon*.

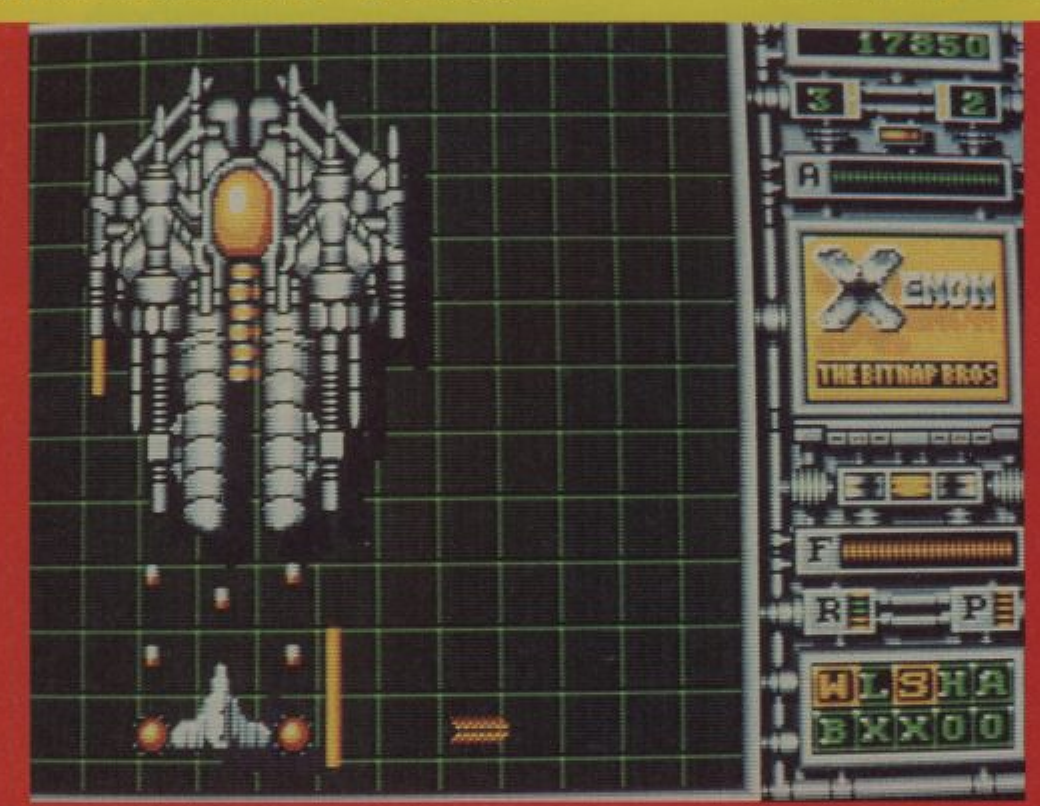
The coin-op will appear under Mastertronic's Arcadia label and the ST and Amiga versions can be found in Melbourne House boxes – now also part of the Mastertronic empire.

What characterises *Xenon* as a home game is the blurb on the box. It tells you why you have to kill 'em as opposed to the coin-op which simply tells you what buttons to use to waste the insect-like aliens.

The action starts when Captain Xod (Digitised pic of programmer – Eric Mathews) comes up on the communications screen and informs you that you are entering 'Sector One'. Xod's in trouble y'see – the Xenites are about to finish him so it's down to you to race through the sixteen levels of the game and save his bacon.

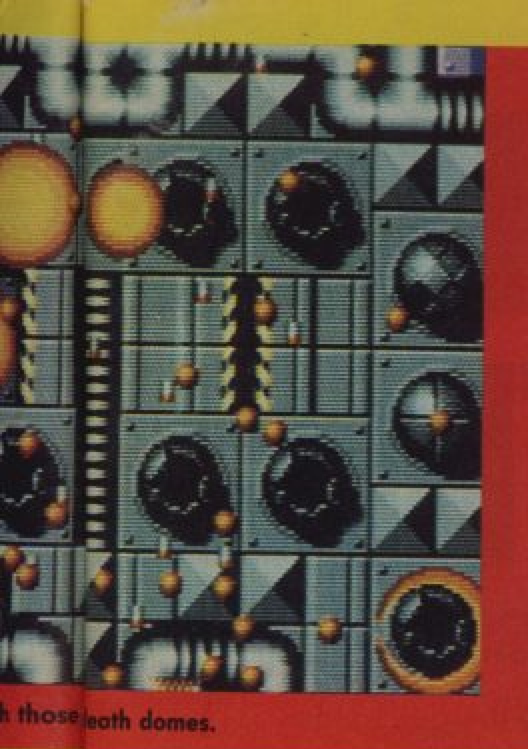
There is a lot more to the plot than that – the entire history of the universe in fact, told in the most over the top sci-fi language you've ever heard. There's loads of garbage about how the universe is going to collapse in on itself and 'Spatial Holo Networks' – highbrow stuff.

Xenon is a hybrid shoot-'em-up. Vertically scrolling and incorporating elements from *Slap Fight, Terra Cresta* and *Xevious*. Your small, nippy space fighter can transform at the shake of the stick into a ground attack craft – or fly low over the city scape taking out the enemy. Flight is best – you



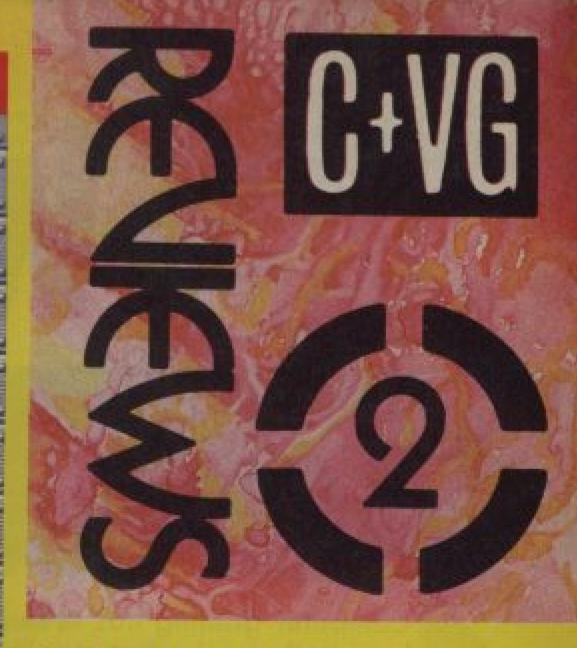
● The nastiest nasty of them all.

● The skies



h those death domes.

● This hulk has two guardian beetles and requires several direct hits to destroy.



ENON

move quicker and can take out the deadly, orange ball spewing nasties at a safe enough distance to stop you weakening your craft. You can't stay airborne constantly as certain of the nasties crawl along the planet surface and cannot be destroyed from above. There are also certain obstacles that need to be cleared.

Some games start off easily and then toughen up after the second level or so. None of this shilly shallying around in *Xenon*.

You are right in the heat of the action from the very start. A third of the way through the level you are confronted by a huge, beetle-like alien that is easily five times the size of your ship.

Several direct hits have to be registered before an orange ball develops in the centre of the monster, pulsates, and finally blows allowing you to pass.

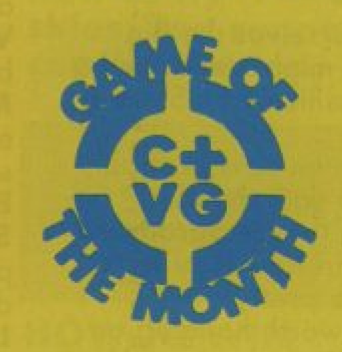
The ground based domes are lethal – constantly opening and closing – spitting out energy sapping balls.

Building your ship is crucial – and fun! Pick up the letters to add wing lazers, a rotating guardian ship, side lazers, diagonal lazers, super flame throwers. If you collect them all your ship becomes one moving dispenser of mega death.

The game has an annoying way of levelling the odds once you get to the giant alien at the end of levels. It strips you of your extra weapons – leaving just the wing lazers.

There is nothing particularly original about *Xenon*. It's just the way that it is done that makes it special and sets it apart. You get the impression when you are playing it that the designers plotted every single ground installation and alien flight path with cunning smiles on their faces – probably chuckling amongst themselves and saying: "The bastards will never do this."

It's tough – you'll see. One of those games that is never meant to be completed. If you clock this you've really got something to crow about. I think Melbourne House should get badges printed and send them out to the people who manage it.



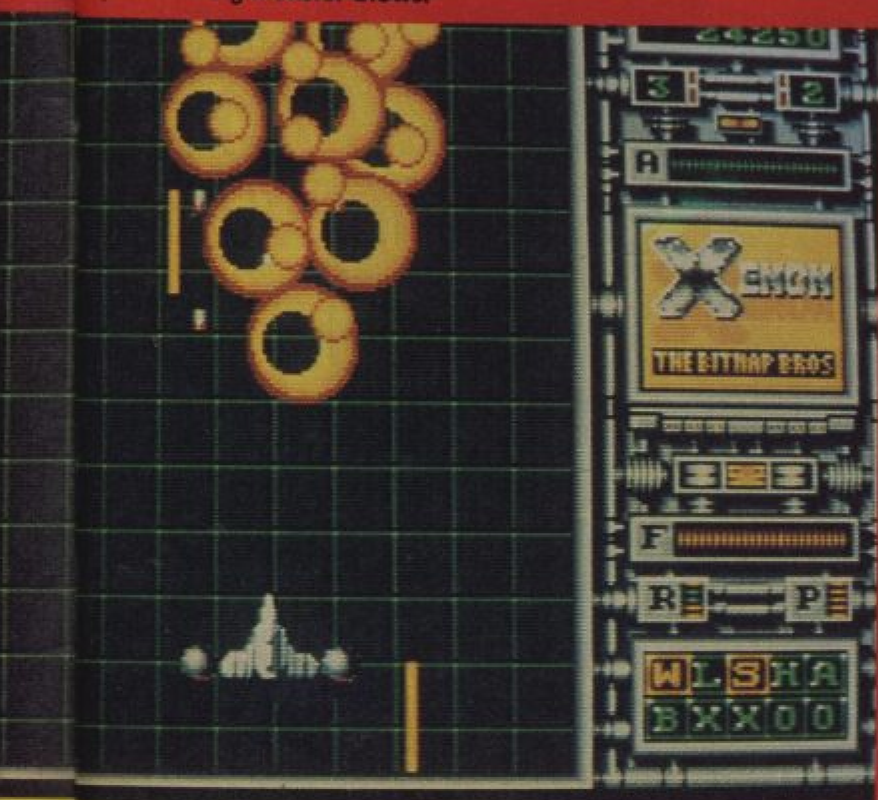
Xenon is an interesting point of comparison between the ST and Amiga. Both versions are brilliant – but the Amiga is better. It's faster and the music just wipes the floor with the ST. Constantly changing and reacting to the joystick and featuring sampled guitar riffs and tremendous explosions. Melbourne are promising Spectrum and 64 versions of the game – but I wouldn't buy until you see the C+VG review. I am not entirely sure the design of the game is strong enough for it to hold up on those machines.

It's difficult for me to tell you how good *Xenon* is. All the cliches are too well worn. You know what I mean, statements like "it's worth buying an ST just to play this" – that kind of crap. All I will say is that in five years of reviewing computer games this is the best shoot-'em-up I've played.

This *is* arcade entertainment to play at home and no bull.

▶ GRAPHICS	9
▶ SOUND	9
▶ VALUE	9
▶ PLAYABILITY	9

kies ligh up when a big monster blows.





● No advanced shoot 'em up is complete without slimy brain-like aliens.

WHO THE HELL DO BROTHERS

Computer gaming has seen individual programmers hyping themselves as stars before — from zany hippies to child geniuses who are waiting until their seventeenth birthday to step into the shiny new Porsche, paid for out of last year's royalties.

There have been some instances of groups hyping themselves. The Bitmap Brothers are one such case. Ask them why they called themselves the Bitmaps and you are likely to get a variety of answers. "It came out of that Beastie Boys song — you know the one that mentions the word brothers, well our name has the word brothers in it too."

Or: "We were going to call ourselves the Big Mac Brothers but we thought we might get done by MacDonalds if we did". Even less likely as Steve is a veggie.

The truth, if they haven't forgotten it, is probably nearer to this: Someone came up with the idea because it was linked to the way they programmed — they all hated it but it stuck and now they have come round to thinking that it is a pretty unforgettable name and so well worth hanging on to. They are now fiercely Bitmap's to the man. Here are their profiles:

• STEVE KELLY

School: Left at sixteen to become a storeman at Currys.
Born: In Manchester and now living in London . . . still speaks Mancunian, though.
Vices: Smoking, nocturnal programming and the consequent afternoon rising, turning the phone off, slot machines.
Best TV prog: *The Prisoner.*
Worst TV prog: All soap.
Best computer prog: *Missile Command* (coin-op) and *Elite.*
Worst computer prog: You forget the really bad ones — which is probably just as well.
Most embarrassing experience: Having to explain to an ambulance man how I walked into a scaffolding pole.
Best film: Paris, Texas.
Should software pirates be locked up?: The people who do it for gain, on a vast scale, definitely should be.
Is 8-bit software dead!: Not for a good while. Some 8 bit games are still better than 16-bit games.



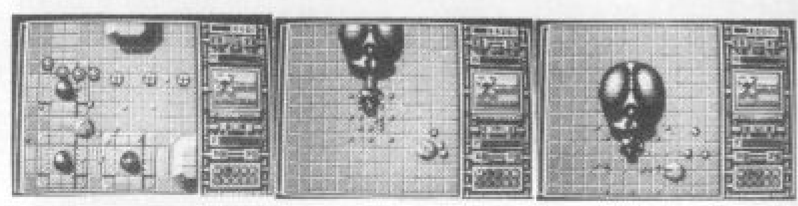
THE BITMAP THINK THEY ARE..?

• MIKE MONTGOMERY
Age: 31.
Born: Southend-on-Sea, educated at Belfairs School, Leigh-on-Sea.
Fave food: Red meat and pork sausages from my local butcher with plenty of sawdust in.
Fave drink: Newquay Steam Bitter.
Fave music: The Beastie Boys, Pink Floyd.
Fave female performer: Stevie Nicks.
Worst female performer: Madonna.
Should software pirates be locked up?: No — they should be hung, drawn and quartered.
Fave computer game: Virus on the Amiga — if there were no pirates there would be no virus.
Fave TV commercial: Thank Crunchy It's Friday and the Telecom one where that kid phones his aunty after failing all his exams.
Should Michelle have had an abortion!: No.
Are the Amiga and ST the future of computer gaming: No — not in the long term, that's the transputer and whizz chips. In the short term they are certainly far superior to any of the 8-bit machines.

• ERIC MATHEWS
Born: Truro, Cornwall.
Age: 25.
Education: BA — Fine Arts, Chelsea School of Art.
Fave artist: Richard Serra — the man who sculptured the huge metal girders at the recently built Broad Street Complex in London.
Fave music: New Order, the Nolans.
Fave game: Invadaload by Richard Aplin.
Should hackers be prosecuted?: No. They should be funded.
What about software pirates?: I would force them to drink St Christopher non-alcoholic lager for the rest of their days.
Fave TV prog: Bulls Eye.
Are there too many soap operas on TV?: No — bring back Howards Way.
Which soap star would you most like to spend an evening in the pub with: Jack Rolfe — Howards' Way.
Fave chocolate bar: Toffee Crisp.
Worst TV commercial: Cadbury's Flake.
Fave take away: Chicken Tikka Masshala.
Are computer game advertisements unnecessarily violent and sexist? Yes.
Why don't girls play computer games?: Because the games are too boring.
Fave car: Triumph Vitesse Convertible.

Competition

Melbourne House is marking the launch of their mega 16 bit shoot 'em up with a chance to win a remote controlled aircraft as a first prize. We'll put you in touch with your nearest club so that you can learn how to fly it — and then take to the skies. Ten runners-up will receive a copy of Xenon — for the ST or Amiga.



HOW TO WIN
Answer the following easy-peasy questions about famous brothers and then tell us what a bit-map is.

(1) Which famous brothers were the pioneers of the first power driven flight:
(a) Wright (b) Wrong (c) Grimm.

(2) Two prominent American politicians were assassinated in the 1960s. They were the brothers:
(a) Kennedy (b) Hoover (c) King.

(3) A famous group of brothers became millionaires through hiring suits. What is their surname?

(4) What is a bit-map?

Answers____________________

____

Name____________________

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Computer____________________

Entries must reach us by March 15th.



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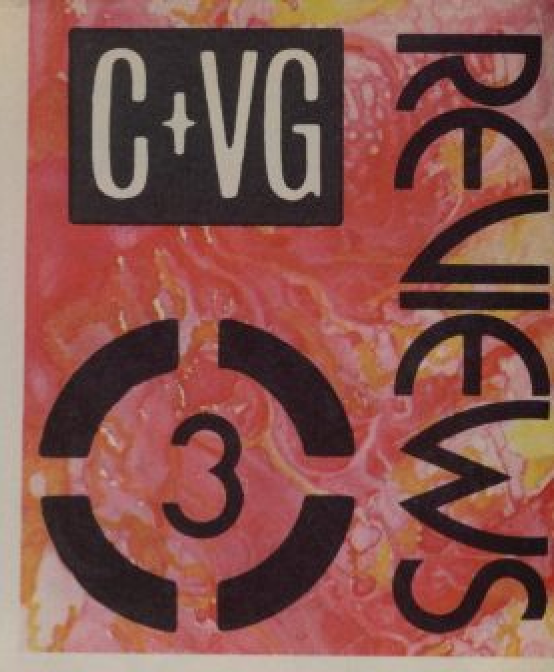
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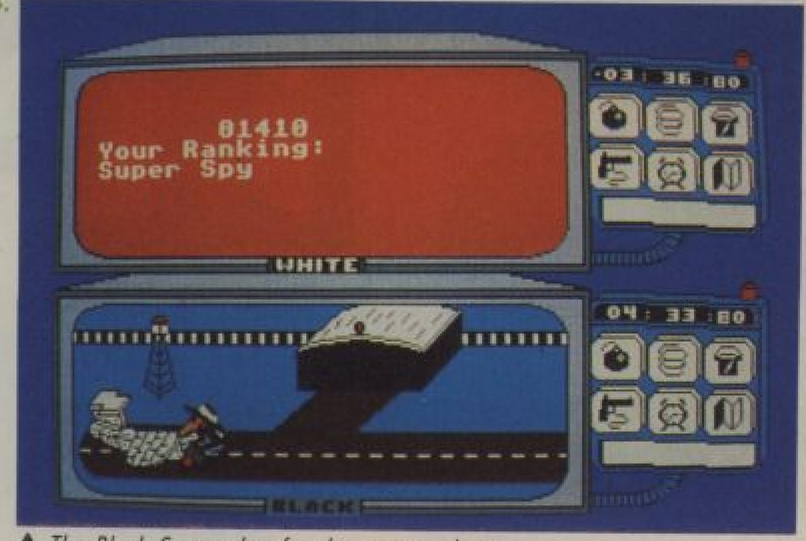


- MACHINES: SPECTRUM, CBM 64, ATARI ST
- SUPPLIER: DATABYTE
- PRICE: £24.95
- VERSION TESTED: ATARI ST
- REVIEWER: EUGENE LACEY

New York based First Star software has the dubious claim to fame of having coded the best and worst computer game versions of popular comic heroes.

Fortunately we are not discussing their appalling *Superman* effort here — but the excellent conversion of Mad Comics' *Spy Vs Spy* strip.

Although not offering any bells and whistles or improvements to sound and graphics, all the essentials of the game play are here in this ST version.



▲ *The Black Spy makes for the escape plane.*

SPY VS SPY

Just as in the comic itself, the game follows the slapstick versions of two bungling spies — who, in this case, have to escape from an embassy with the top secret plans safely tucked away in your briefcase.

Two players can race against each other to find the plans — setting traps for each other or simply battling it out with the sword if you should happen into the same room of the huge building.

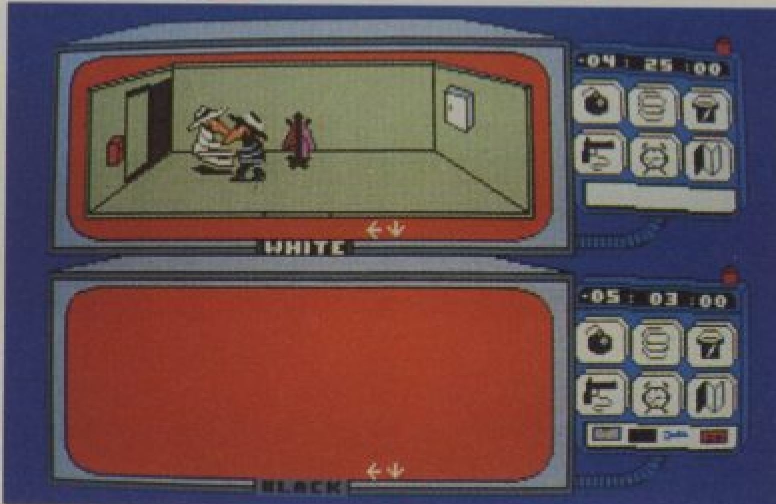
The game is at its best as a two player challenge — in fact it still remains one of the best two player games ever, despite being a bit long in the tooth now.

The real fun in *Spy* is watching your opponent falling for one of your devious booby traps. The Trapulator is a box to the left of the play windows with all the traps represented by icons. There are bombs, springs, a bucket of water, strings and guns. Certain of the traps have to be treated with care — like the cannon shaped bomb with the characteristic smouldering fuse. This one has an annoying habit of blowing up in your face.

Fortunately there are remedies for the traps hidden in the embassy, and you can pick these up and carry them from room to room — which is useful if there is a room you suspect may have something useful in it but you cannot search it because of the trap.

The neat thing about *Spy* is that as well as being a race against the other spy, it is also a race against time. A digital clock ticks away above the Trapulator. When the clock ticks down to zero your escape plane will take off from the abandoned airfield with or without you. And remember there is no point in making a dash for the plane without the plans, your passport, a key and some money.

▼ *Searching the rooms for gadgets.*



▲ *It's fight time when the two spies meet.*

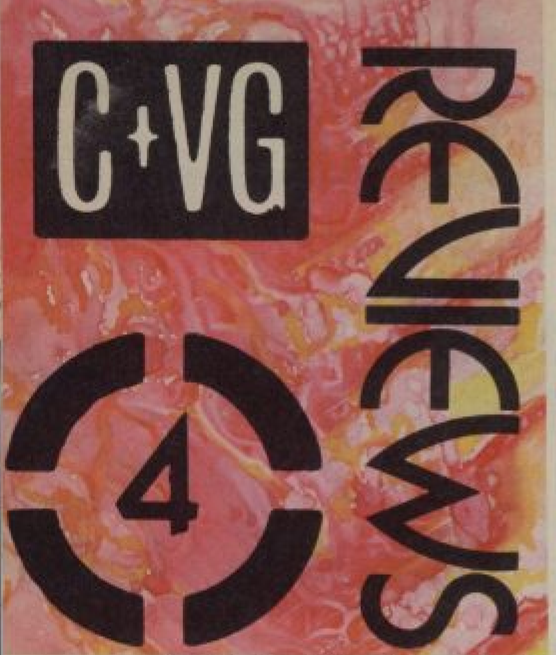
The conclusion to *Spy* and the way in which the whole arcade adventure is planned is a credit to the game designers.

There is a real sense of entertainment and pride when you view the end game sequence having completed the challenge for the first time. You see your spy climbing aboard the plane, watch it edge gently down the runway, and then ease into the air and away off the screen. Possibly one of the best end game sequences ever — and well worth persevering with the game to see it.

There were three games altogether in the Spy series. It has not yet been decided if they will all be converted to the ST and Amiga. Episodes two and three were not that different to the first.

However, the original *Spy* game is well worth considering — even if the price is a bit steep at just under £25. There are still not that many decent two player games for the ST — so the addition of one of the best is certainly welcome.

► GRAPHICS	6
► SOUND	6
► VALUE	4
► PLAYABILITY	8



BLACK

► MACHINE: ATARI ST
► SUPPLIER: FIREBIRD
► PRICE: £19.95
► REVIEWER: PAUL BOUGHTON

One glance and I took an instant shine to *Black Lamp*. If you want a rustic romp through a medieval wonderland, packed with thrills, spills, action and romance check it out. It's a visual delight carried off with great style.

So roll the credits for the programmers and bring up the applause: Graphics by Steve Cain. Programming by "Kenny" Everett. Music and sound by Fred Gray.

The concept of the game, to be honest, isn't that original. It's a platform and ladders arcade adventure which has Jolly Jack the jester on a quest to recover nine enchanted lamps — including the most revered Black Lamp — and restore peace and happiness to the Kingdom of Allegoria and so win the hand of Princess Grizelda (that's the romantic bit). But it is the way the game is carried off which makes it a cut above the rest.

The game covers 256 screens, ranging from rural landscapes and castle ramparts to gothic-style interiors. Each screen is beautifully illustrated and populated with some really amazing creatures, all brilliantly animated.

The game always starts by an empty chests to which all the lamps must be returned. But the chest moves around each time a new game starts so you don't get bored by having to go over the same old ground each time.

The Lamps are scattered far and wide throughout the kingdom. When Jack finds one, he must collect it and take it back to any one of the Chests. The Black Lamp is different — it is always guarded closely by that most fearsome of enemies, the Dragon. And the Dragon won't give it up until he's dead. Every Dragon will have a Lamp of some colour, so the only way for Jack to return all the Lamps is to fight every Dragon he

▼ *No peace in the village — beware dragon flies.*

▼ *The chest to which the lamps must be returned.*

SUPER S

► MACHINES: ST, SPECTRUM, CBM 64, AMSTRAD.
► SUPPLIER: ELECTRIC DREAMS.
► PRICE: £19.99
► VERSION TESTED: ATARI ST.
► REVIEWER: EUGENE LACEY.

Atari Games surprised a number of people with their coin-op hit *Super Sprint*. It seemed to offer very plain driving entertainment with view from above graphics — when *Out Run* and the like were setting the world alight with fast moving 3D thrills and spills in gasp-quality pictures.

Perhaps the explanation is that *Super Sprint* is just about the nearest thing to Scalextric you can get on a video screen. You are presented with an overview of the whole track with the formula one racers appearing as tiny moving specks — about the size of an ant.

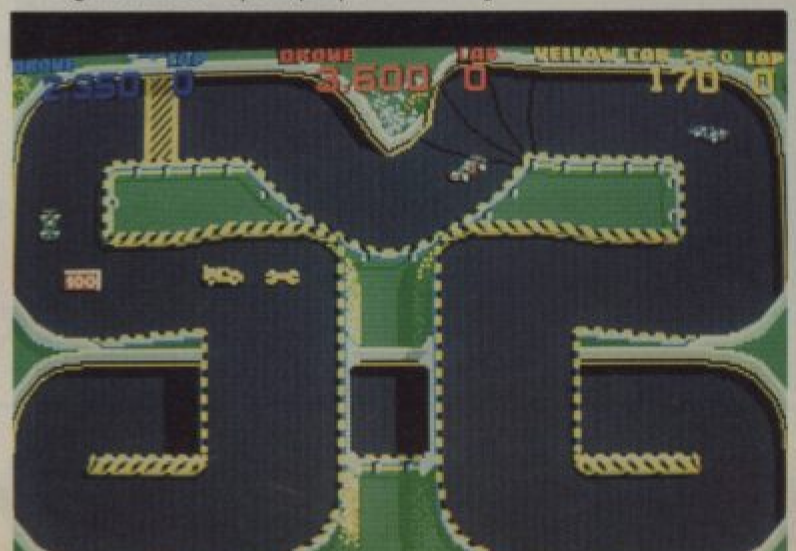
Given their minuteness, steering control is what the game is all about. Very slight taps and adjustments to the stick are required to right the car after taking bends. Just like Scalextric, you press the joystick button to accelerate — hurtling down the strait and speeding away from bends.

Each race is at least four laps long and — should you lap the drone cars — a new more difficult track will be randomly generated.

You can choose the difficulty level of the first track you want to start on by turning a steering wheel towards the track of your choice on an opening screen.

The real fun of *Super Sprint* is in the business of lapping. This is an advantage the game has over the conventional 3D race games. You can always keep the other cars in your sights and plan what part of the road you

▼ *Eugene is about to pick up a power boosting wrench.*



▼ *Choose your extra feature if you have enough poi*

C+VG REVIEWS

LAMP

meets!

Scattered around the kingdom are various Bonus Objects that Jack can collect along the way. These take the form of jewels, musical instruments, weapons, and food and drink.

All Jack has to fight off the evil creatures is a magical belt buckle which shoots powerful bolts.

Jack has five lives, each governed by his energy level. His energy drains away if he gets zapped or falls from too great a height. Collecting food and drink, however, will boost his energy.

Every five jewels Jack collects will make him invulnerable to attack for between 30 and 40 seconds. Five musical instruments also makes him immune to energy loss for a while. And by collecting five weapons he gets increased firepower, again for between 30 and 40 seconds.

Bent on thwarting Jack are a whole host of creatures, with varying nastiness and viciousness.

Dragonflies and wasps are relatively harmless and pack a small sting. Vampire bats try to make sure Jack gets it in the neck. Werewolves are quick moving flesh-rippers. Crows drop exploding thistle down and buzzards blitz you with exploding skulls.

Goblin warriors come in the form of swordsmen, archers and spear carriers. Slime Witches spit gooey green slime. Trolls carry spark spitting hammers. Slayers fire off lightning bolts. Imps carry tridents which spit fire. And then there are the dragons guarding the Black Lamp. Jack must strike a vulnerable part of the body, and turn the creature black, to kill it.

Black Lamp gets my vote as the best Firebird game I've seen. In Jack, they've got a neat character we could be seeing more of. Let's hope so anyway.

►GRAPHICS	9
►SOUND	9
►VALUE	9
►PLAYABILITY	9

5

▼ Food — but danger lurks.

▼ Enter the dragon.



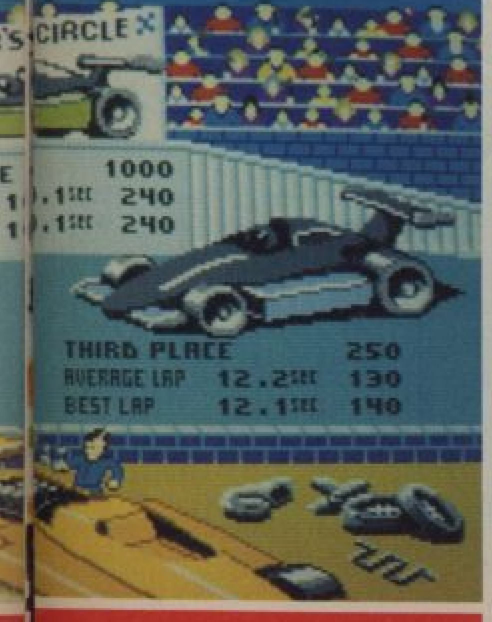
HIGH SCORE:500000 PLAYER TWO UP

PLAYER ONE:7500

PLAYER TWO:2500

SPRINT

enougl points.



want to be in to take the lead.

On the later screens certain hazards appear to make life more difficult. A chopper buzzes the track — making a pass from left to right at great speed across the screen and blasting any racer that happens to be in its line of fire.

There are also bridges and tunnels to be steered through — the secret here is to line up your car and speed through — driving 'blind' until your car appears at the other side. There are also oil slicks, and gates that open and close offering a risky short cut.

For real dare devils there are ramps to be jumped.

As well as all the obstacles, there are items dotted around the track that you can collect which help you build up your racer.

Three golden spanners, for instance, will enable you to chose an extra feature at the end of the race. This may be higher top speed, turbo acceleration, increased scoring, or super traction.

The program is at its best as two or even three players game. In three player mode two people can race with joysticks with another on keyboard. This creates a great forum for jibes about each player's performance.

Super Sprint is such a simple game that the quality of ST graphics don't make it a much better game than any other version. Sure, it does look better — but the game never really majored on graphics anyway.

Fans of the coin-op will welcome this competent conversion to the ST library.

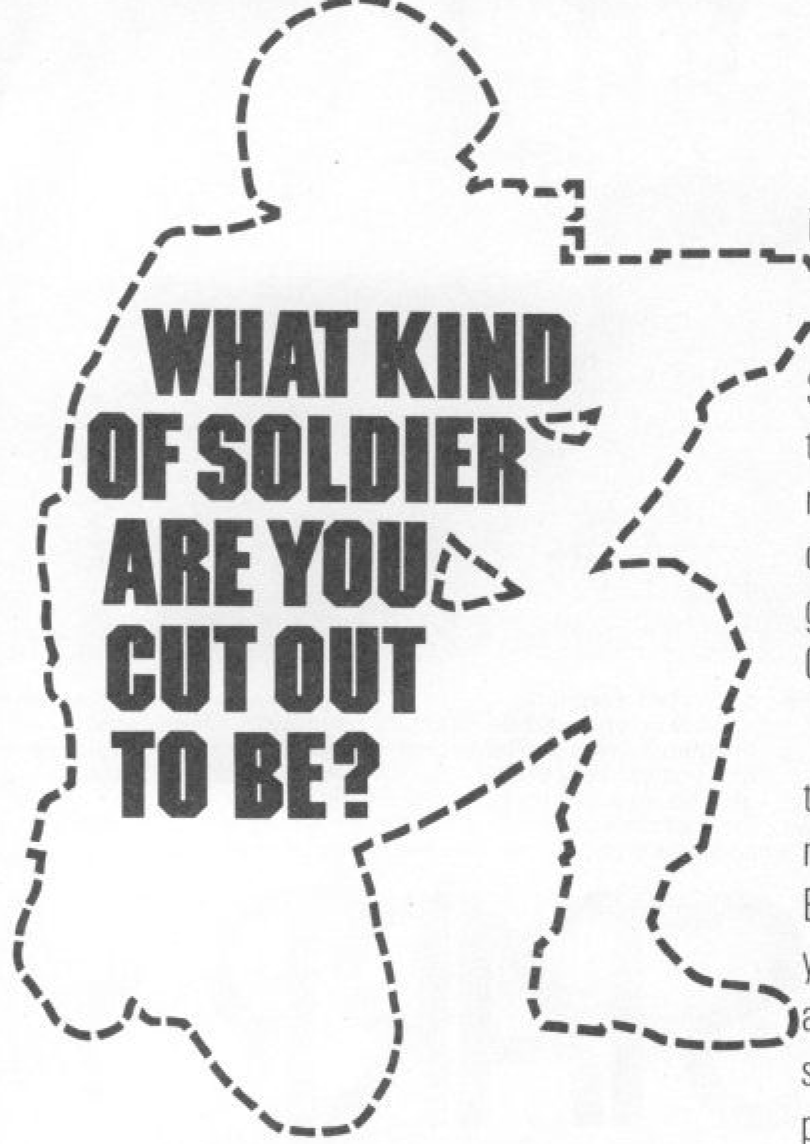
►GRAPHICS	7
►SOUND	6
►VALUE	6
►PLAYABILITY	7

▼ The ED's yellow car takes a risky short cut.





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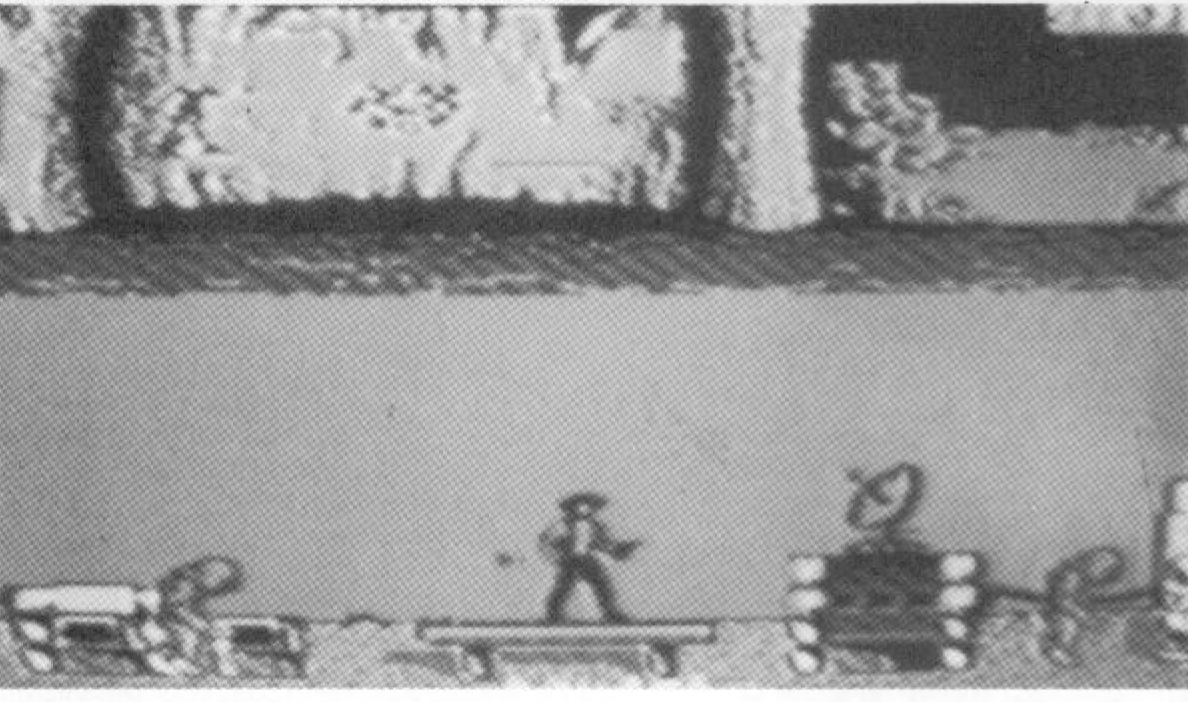
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THE PROFESSIONALS

▼ Bravestarr's mix of arcade and strategy doesn't quite come off



BRAVESTARR

- ► MACHINES: C64, SPECTRUM, AMSTRAD CPC RANGE
- ► SUPPLIER: GO!/US GOLD
- ► PRICE: £9.95
- ► VERSION TESTED: AMSTRAD DISK
- ► REVIEWER: DAVID

New Texas has a problem! As one of the richest sources of Kerium in the galaxy, the planet has attracted hoards of prospectors. Most of them are evil little squirts out to turn a fast buck.

All corruption on the planet seems to point to one person, Tex Hex. Now Hex's boss, a particularly nasty individual by the name of Stampede, has kidnapped the ancient Indian Shamen, believing the old sage to possess magic powers capable of bringing back to life the bones of all the broncasaurs on the planet.



If Stampede's plan succeeds, he will gain an irresistible stranglehold on New Texas. As Marshall Bravestarr, your task is to save Shamen from Stampede's grasp, and so save New Texas from total domination. To do this, you must find the locations of certain key places on the planet which contain the clues that will eventually lead you to Stampede's hideout.

You have nine days in which to complete your task.

The game starts in Fort Kerium, where the first thing you must do is shoot your way to your saddle rocket. This is an arcade of the side-view, left/right scrolling variety, in which you can run along the streets of the town or hop over the rooftops. Either way, there's plenty of opportunity to kill and maim with a good variety of nasties on the menu. Dead nasties often drop amulets which, when picked up, temporarily give you extra fire power or freeze time.

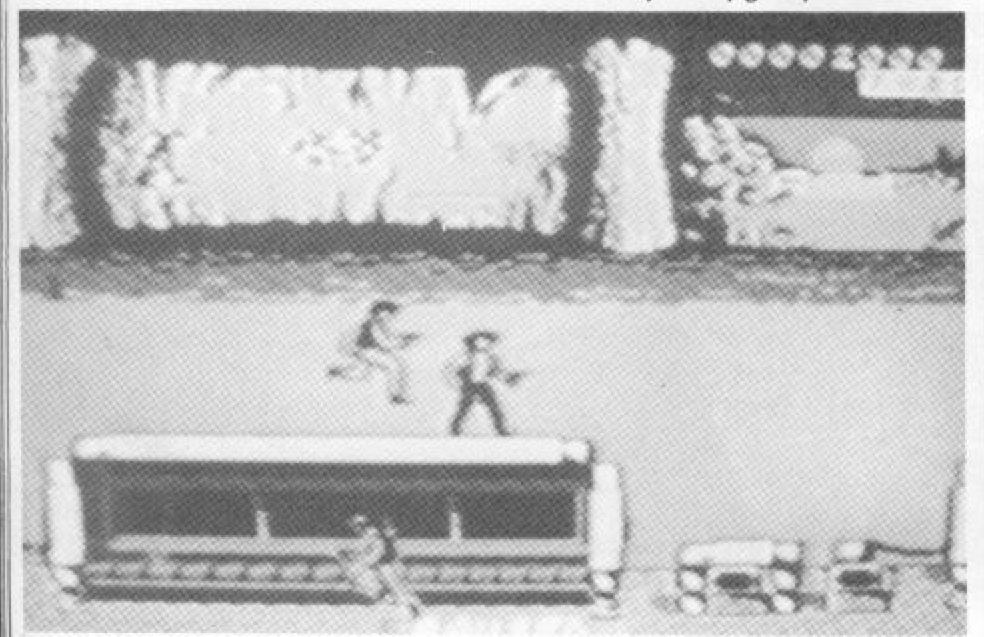
Once on your saddle rocket, the gameplay is similar except that you can stay off the ground, so avoiding many of the creatures out to kill you. The saddle is also your only means of getting to other parts of the planet. There's a mine, where you'll find a green gem which can be exchanged for cash back in the town. The cash buys you information in the local bar and so on.

The arcade side of *Bravestarr* has been well programmed, offering fast joystick response, reasonable scrolling, and a whole host of big, colourful creatures to zap. The problem is that defeating Stampede is just not enough of a challenge.

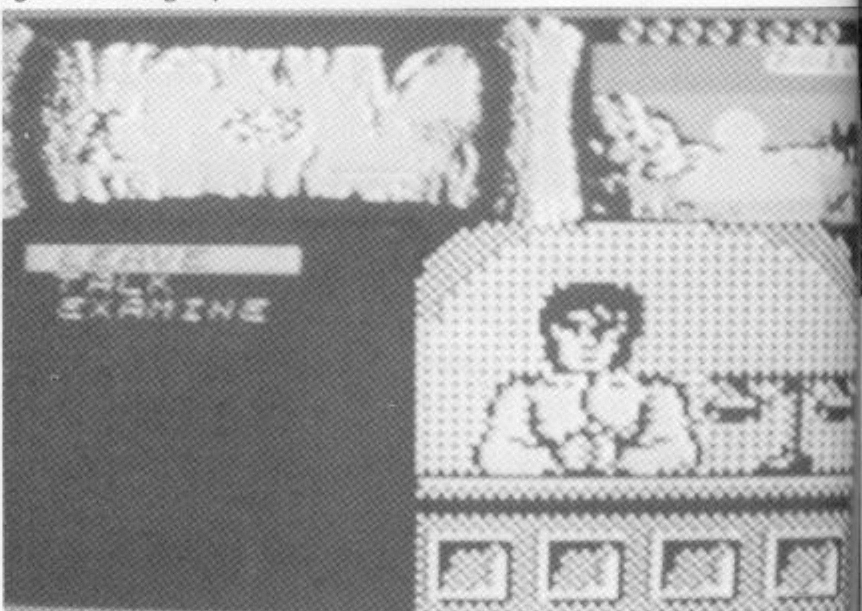
Outside the town, there are only four places to visit, and the game massages you into the right way of solving the game simply by offering no alternatives when you enter the wrong buildings at the wrong time.

So *Bravestarr* is really just a series of enjoyable sideways scrolling arcade sequences, strung together by a thin plot, providing little or no long-term challenge. From the time I first loaded the game, it was all over in well under an hour – Shamen was rescued, New Texas was once again a safe place to visit, and another game had bitten the dust. Come on Go! we deserve more of a challenge for our money.

► GRAPHICS	8
► SOUND	6
► VALUE	4
► PLAYABILITY	7

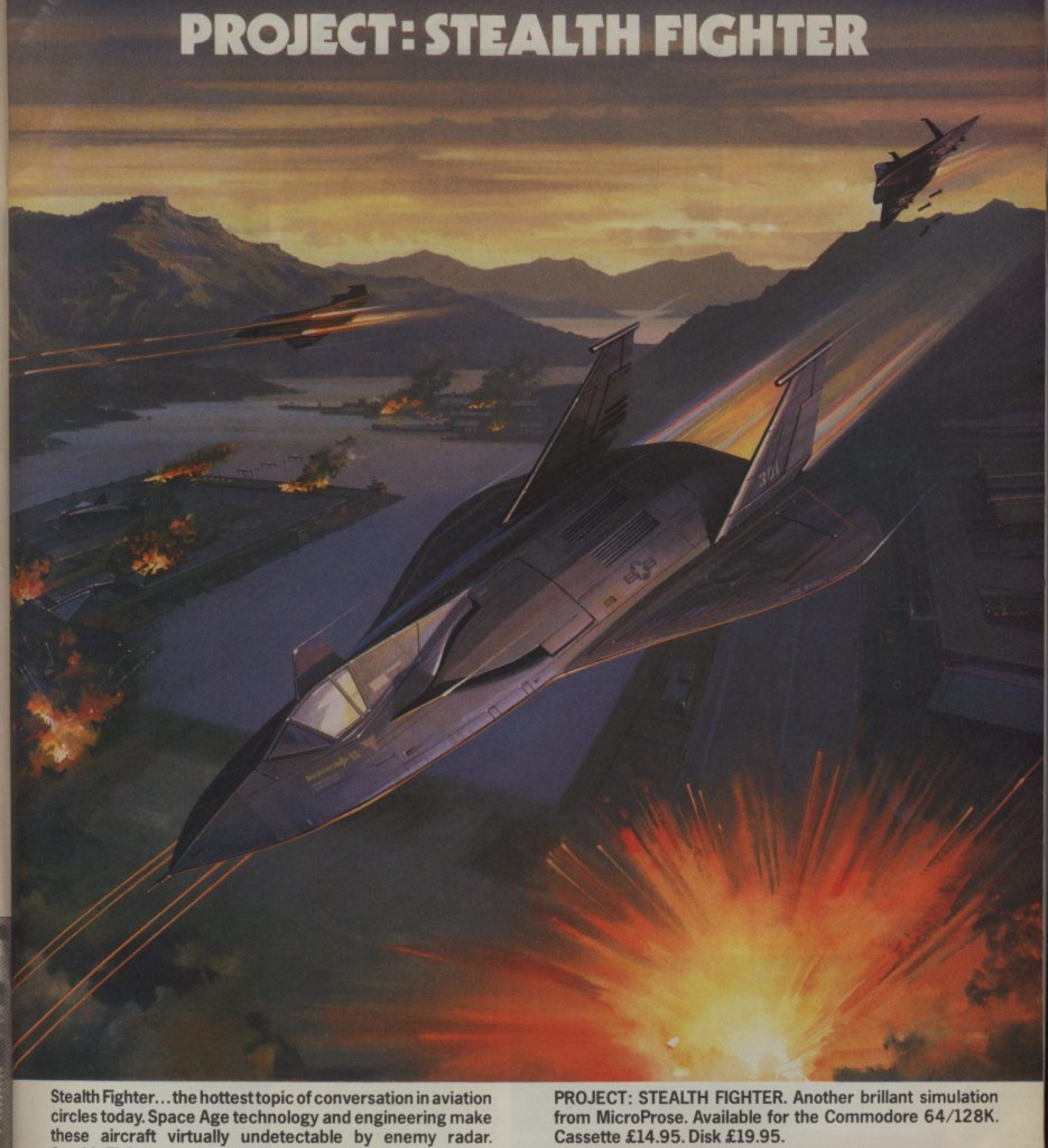


▲ The arcade side of Bravestarr has been well programmed



▲ The game is perhaps a bit lacking in difficulty





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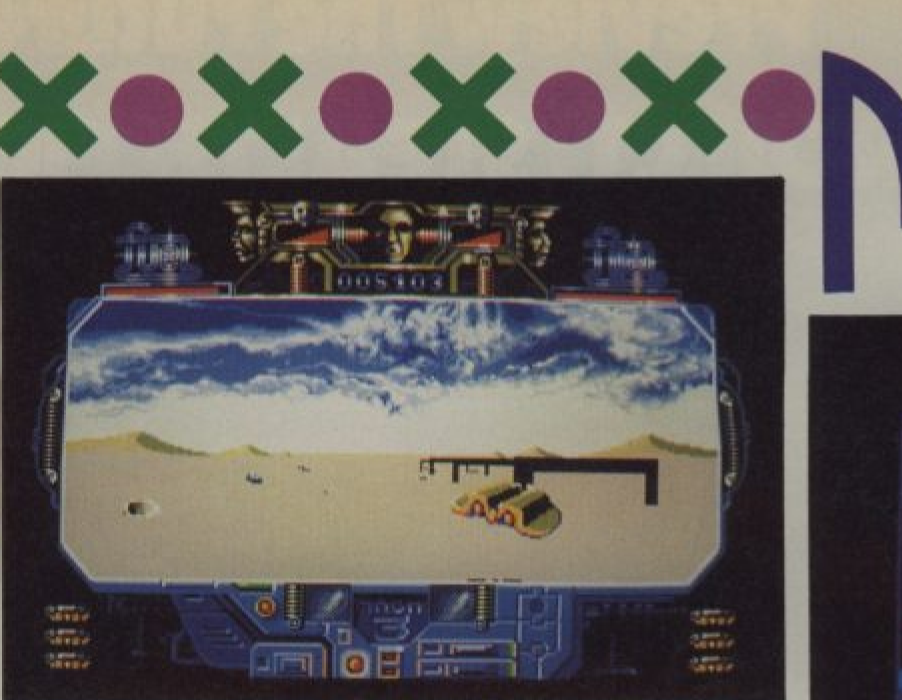
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MAC


▲ Mach 3's a winner, but a bit pricey.

- ► MACHINES: ATARI ST, AMIGA, CBM 64, AMSTRAD.
- ► SUPPLIER: LORICIELS
- ► PRICE: ST AND AMIGA, £19.95
- ► VERSION TESTED: ST
- ► REVIEWER: EUGENE LACEY

French software firm Loriciels decided that it wanted a soft and sexy female voice to purr "get ready" at the start of its 3D style shoot 'em up — Mach 3.

Stumped as to where to find one, the designers set out for the Follies Bergere where they find a topless dancer who agrees to have her suitabily sensuous vowels digitised for the game. The firm's UK office cannot come up with a name to go with the voice so I have decided to call her Fifi.

The action in *Mach 3* has nothing much to do with Fifi but concerns the misfortunes of another unfortunate French girl — Gwendolene who is being held prisoner by the mutant sorceror Sfax.

Step up one hunky young space cadet and zoom off to beyond the "portals of space" where you can knock to confront the evil one.

Fifi 's "get ready" message may remind you of *Space Harrier* and certainly the whole solid 3D feel of the graphics together with their bright colours bring the Sega game to mind.

When you finally confront Sfax at the beginning of the second level the similarities to *Space Harrier* appear to be more than just coincidental. His face appears in front of your ship ducking and diving to avoid missiles. His mug shot is also shown in the information panel at the top of the action screen. Everytime he sustains a hit he grimaces until his face turns into a dying, skeletal, hollow-eyed mess.

Another similarity to *Space Harrier* is the way in which your ship skims the surface. It is a case of hurtling forward blasting like crazy and dodging whatever nasties you cannot waste.

Every so often you will need to swoop into the air to take



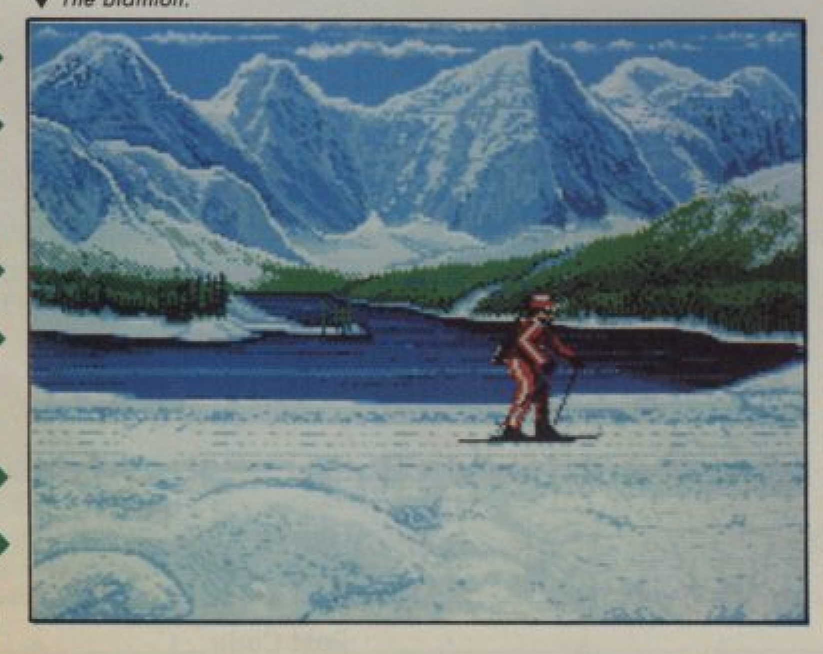
▲ Can you rescue Gwendolene?

WINTER O

- ► MACHINES: C64, SPECTRUM, ST.
- ► SUPPLIER: TYNESOFT.
- ► PRICE: £9.95, BBC & CBM 64, CASSETTE, £14.95 DISK, £7.95 SPECTRUM, £19.95 ST AND AMIGA.
- ► VERSION TESTED: ATARI ST.
- ► REVIEWER: EUGENE LACEY.

When you pick up a game and find an introduction inside by that old duffer David Vine, then read on and discover that there is also a competition in it to win a trip to the Winter Olympics — only the entry date has expired — you know at once there is something a little wrong.

I mean listen to what the old duffer had to say about the biathlon: "It's like using a sledge hammer for an hour or so and then trying to throw a dart in the bull's eye."


▼ The biathlon.

Computer biathlon in *Winter Olympiad '88* qualifies for no such glowing descriptions. At least it didn't when I played it on my ST. It's just tedious.

Yes, I know the screen shots look stunning. The graphics are highly commendable — but the game play is practically non-existent. Biathlon is supposed to take place over a long trek. You only ski through a couple of scrolling screens before you get to the firing range — then the graphics repeat themselves three times until the finishing post comes up.

Not all of the events are this bad though. In fact some of them are quite good, like the Ski Jump, for example.

At the end of the ski ramp you press fire to launch your skier into the air. The animation is quite effective as the skier flies through the air with his skis dangling at the ends of his legs as you struggle to balance him up for the landing. If you land the skier successfully, he glides to a halt at the bottom of the hill where are a cheering

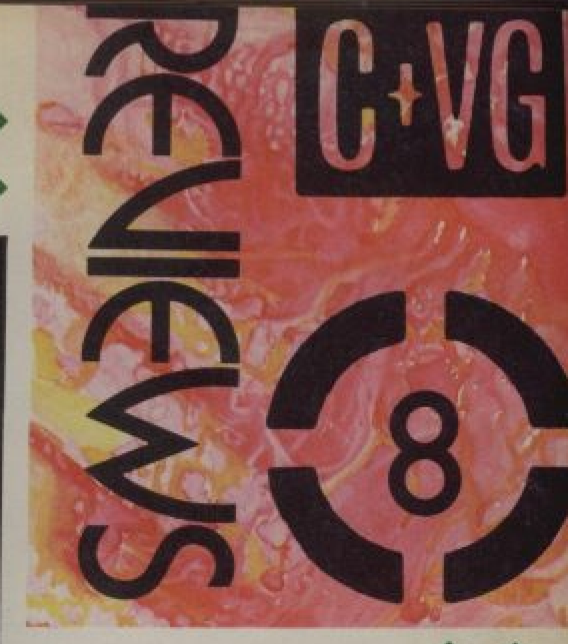
▼ The Ski Jump.


CH 3





▲ *The digitised sound adds considerably to the game.*



out the formations of Sfax's fighters sent into to stop you.
The ship's flight is very impressive — if a little difficult to control. It sweeps into the air at great speed and at a very steep as if a gust of wind is rushing up under its wings and forcing it like a power-glider into the air. This gives the effect of the ship swaying all over the screen at great speed — and it will take a good practice to master aerial combat — novices are advised to stay on the surface.

Bonus points can be earned by flying through the goal posts that appear in rows of four at regular intervals.

To progress to a new level and have another blast at Sfax himself you will need to successfully fly through one of the black portals.

As you can see from the screen shots above the graphics in Mach 3 are exceptional and they lose nothing in the animation either. But the real strength of Mach 3 is the sound effects and digitised speech.

The explosions and sound of missiles being launched are convincing — especially at maximum volume. Fifi's repertoire is also fun. She says "Game Over" as if she were inviting you in for a cup of coffee, and announces the high score table with an "Oh Boy" squealed an octave higher.

There is a question mark in my mind about the lastabilility of *Mach 3* which, considering the £20 price tag, should be treated seriously.

I played the game for several hours without destroying Sfax but I did get the impression that it would not take me that long if I really put my mind to it. A very strong shoot-'em-up without doubt — but I for one would feel a lot happier buying it without such a hefty price tag.

► GRAPHICS	9
► SOUND	9
► VALUE	5
► PLAYABILITY	6

LYMPIAD 88



crowd are held back by a rope fence — just like the real thing.

Another fairly good event is the Bob Sled. It includes quite good 3D effects as the sleek bob hurtles through the ice tunnels. The Bob is launched by waggling the joystick. Pressing fire makes the riders jump into the bob and away they go — now it's down to you to steer as best as you can, using the fire button to slow the bob down for the bends.

Winter Olympiad wouldn't be complete without the slalom and Tynesoft have not left out this event. Time penalties are posed for every flag you hit or avoid. Again the fire button centres the skier and can also be used for adding speed as you approach the final push towards the finishing line.

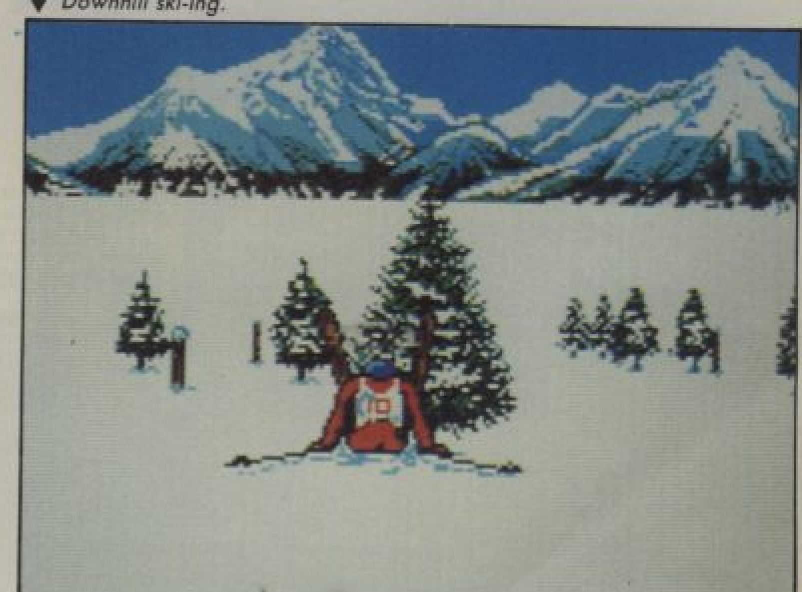
The Downhill ski-ing event is quite imaginative as it features two views of the slope. The main picture shows you skier negotiating the course. At the bottom right of the screen there is also a goggles-eye view of the trees and ground rushing towards you. It is possible to complete the downhill by just looking through the goggles. A nice touch this.

A lot of effort has gone into *Winter Olympiad '88*. It comes on two disks and has stacks of option. You are also treated to an opening ceremony and can choose your favourite country from a comprehensive list of choices.

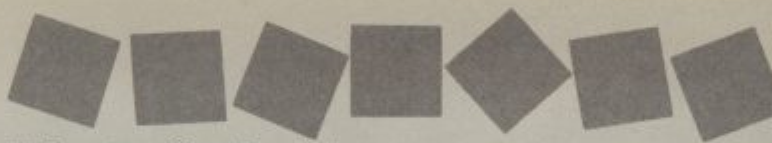
Despite all this, I cannot recommend the game. The pretty graphics do not compensate from a basic lack of gameplay. If you are seriously in the market for a winter sports game for your ST then I would suggest you check out Epyx/US Gold's *Winter Games*.

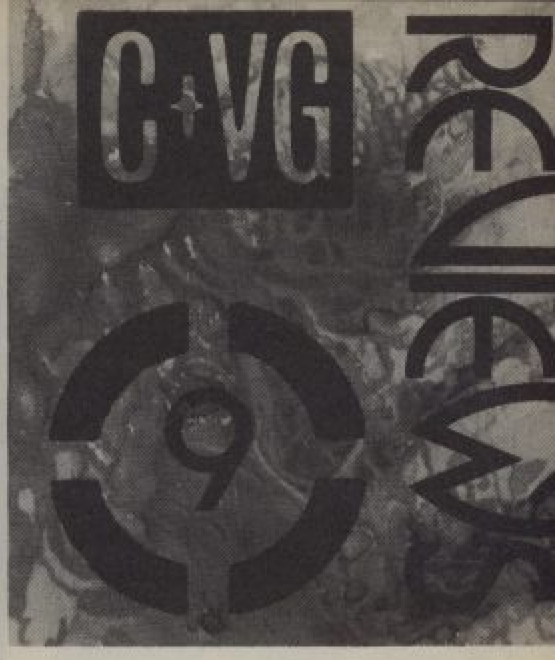
► GRAPHICS	8
► SOUND	7
► VALUE	4
► PLAYABILITY	4

▼ *Downhill ski-ing.*



► MACHINE: ATARI ST
► SUPPLIER: OCEAN
► PRICE: £19.95
► VERSION TESTED: ATARI ST.
► REVIEWER: DAVID BISHOP





ECO

Ocean is not renown for its thought provoking software but their latest 16-bit release, *ECO*, may well have you contemplating life, the universe and the price of ST software.

Designed and programmed by Liverpool based Denton Designs, *ECO* places you on the bottom rung of the evolutionary ladder, with one single aim . . . survival.

To begin with, the program randomly generates a world, complete with climate and population . . . a kind of speeded up software version of 'the dawn of time'!

As a lowly and insignificant baby insect, you are thrown into this world, in search of food and a mate.

The world is seen in 3D, initially from behind your insect, which is shown in beautifully animated vectorgraphics, as is the case with all other trees and animals in the game. As you move your insect, so new creatures come into view; some are walking, others gallop, squirm, or hop, and still others have perfected the art of flight.

To mate, you need to find and approach another member of your own species. If there's one thing more frustrating than being eaten just before you manage to mate, it's seeing your potential partner getting squashed by some giant dinosaur who wasn't looking where he was going.

Successfully mating brings up the 'gene design' screen, where you can unlock, and move, one of your genes to create (hopefully) a more advanced species. Every time you mate, you can unlock another gene, giving you still more possibilities for evolution.

Each gene affects different aspects of your make-up, but many interact with each other to bring about very complex changes in the species. As you slide genes into new configurations, the new creature these changes would produce, is shown in windows giving you three different views — front, side, and plan.

Genes affect such things as the number and size of limbs, the occurrence of wings, body size, whether the new creature will walk upright or on all fours, and numerous other evolutionary factors. The trick is to work out which are the more important genes and how they interact.

Each time you succeed in moving up the evolutionary scale, there are more species that you can kill and eat (including all the species that you have just evolved through), and fewer animals that are a direct threat to your existence.

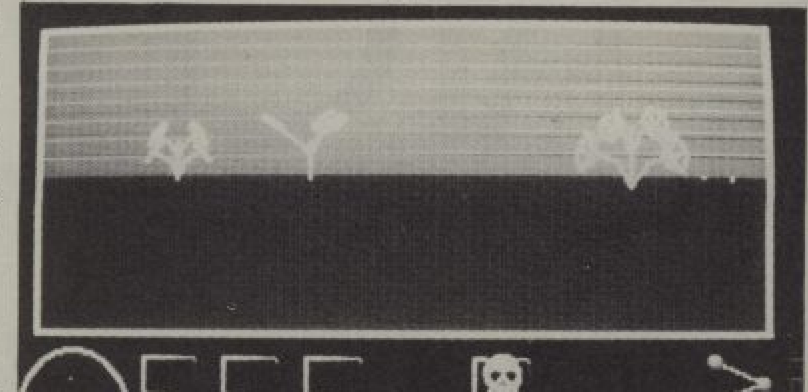
However, this doesn't mean that you can develop into a horselike quadruped, or a humanlike biped, and not worry about being knocked off. Far from it, because the concentration of creatures, above you on the evolutionary scale, will always increase enough to keep you on your toes — or hoofs or claws!

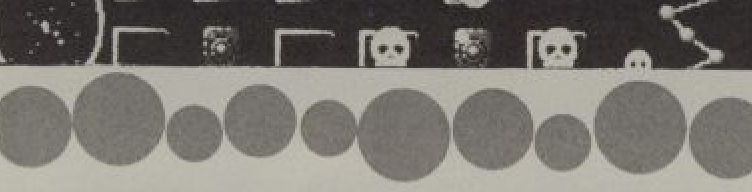
Failure to feed and mate before the timer, in the form of a skull sinking into the flames, runs out will result in your species becoming extinct. The same fate awaits you if you are squashed or eaten by a superior species.

Although it may not appeal to hardened arcade freaks, *ECO* is a beautifully conceived and implemented piece of software, that is not only fun to play, but could also be used to illustrate Darwin's theories of evolution in the biology classroom. Full marks to Denton and Ocean.

► GRAPHICS 8
► SOUND 8
► VALUE 9
► PLAYABILITY 8

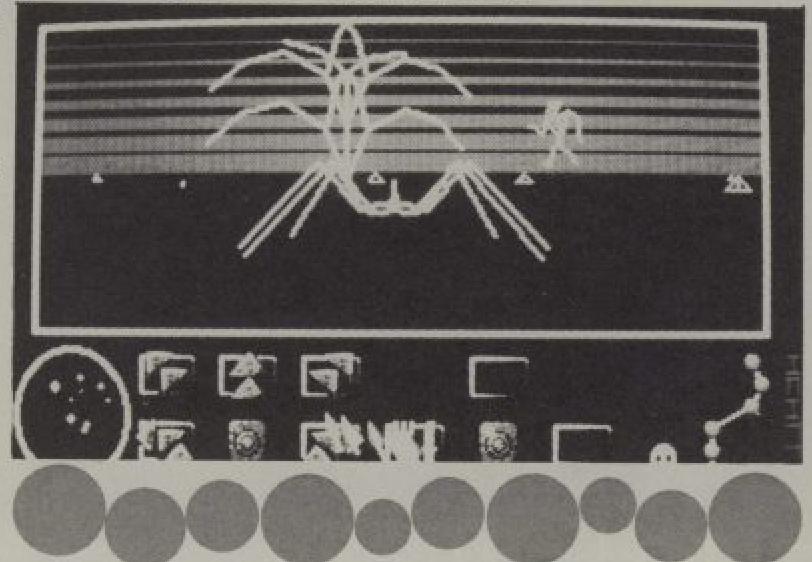
▼ *Sun sets on Ocean's evolutionary game.*



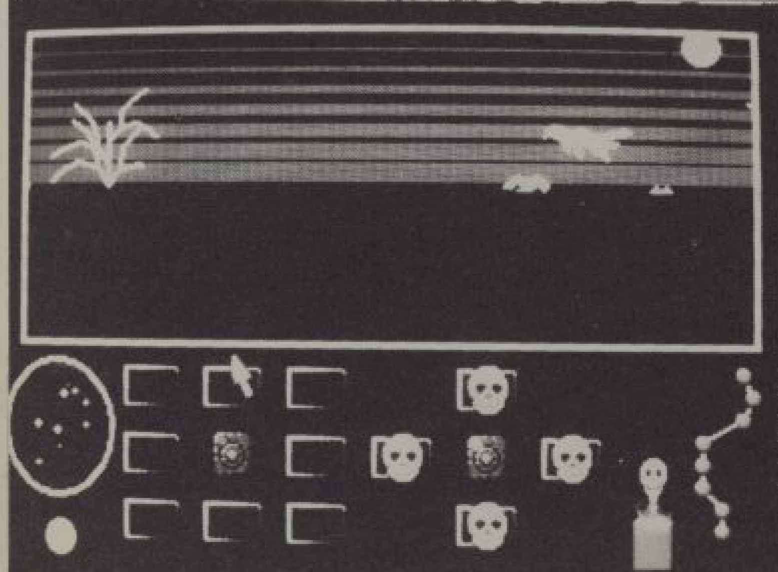




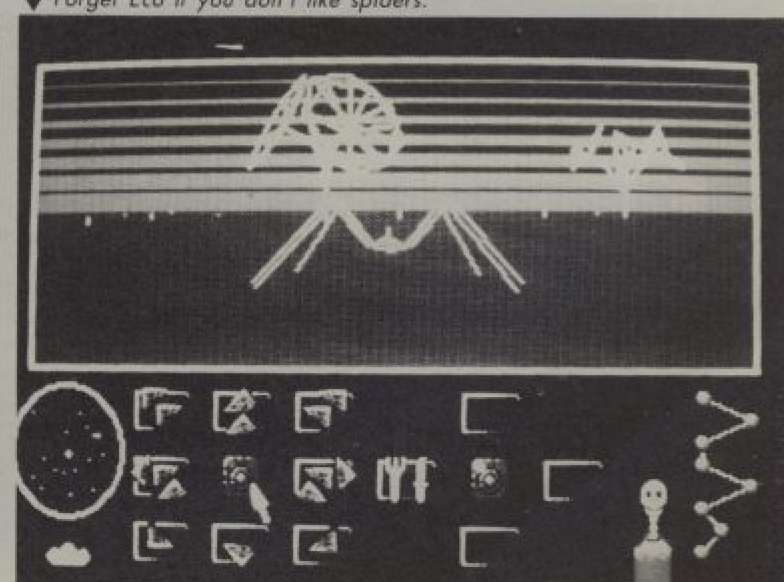
▼ *Denton Designs bounce back on the Atari ST.*

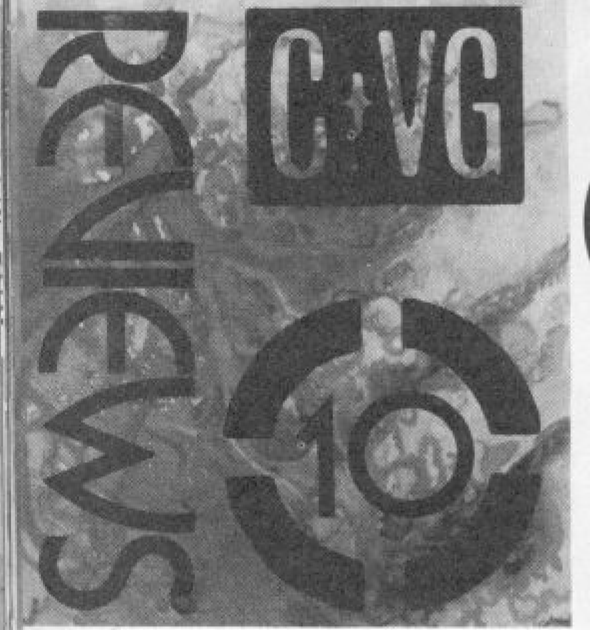


▼ *A bird flies over the land of Eco.*



▼ *Forget Eco if you don't like spiders.*





CATCH 23

► MACHINE: ATARI ST
► SUPPLIER MARTECH
► PRICE: £
► REVIEWER: DAVID BISHOP

Satellite pictures have confirmed that the enemy's CK 23 orbital interceptor is now operational.

Able to stay in geo-stationary orbit over any location, the CK 23 can swoop down into the atmosphere and destroy our missiles and aircraft with unstoppable speed and accuracy. In short, it is the enemy's most feared and potent weapon.

The CK 23 development site is the most heavily guarded, and secret, military complex on Earth. You have just been dropped into the site by parachute.

Once you have landed, you can move freely about the complex using the joystick, or travel large distances quickly, using the shuttle system — a kind of 21st century bus ride. Buildings, shuttle stops, trees and mines are all seen in vectorgraphic display, reminiscent of *Mercenary*.

Most buildings cannot be entered — those that can are distinguished by the presence of a door. Sounds logical!

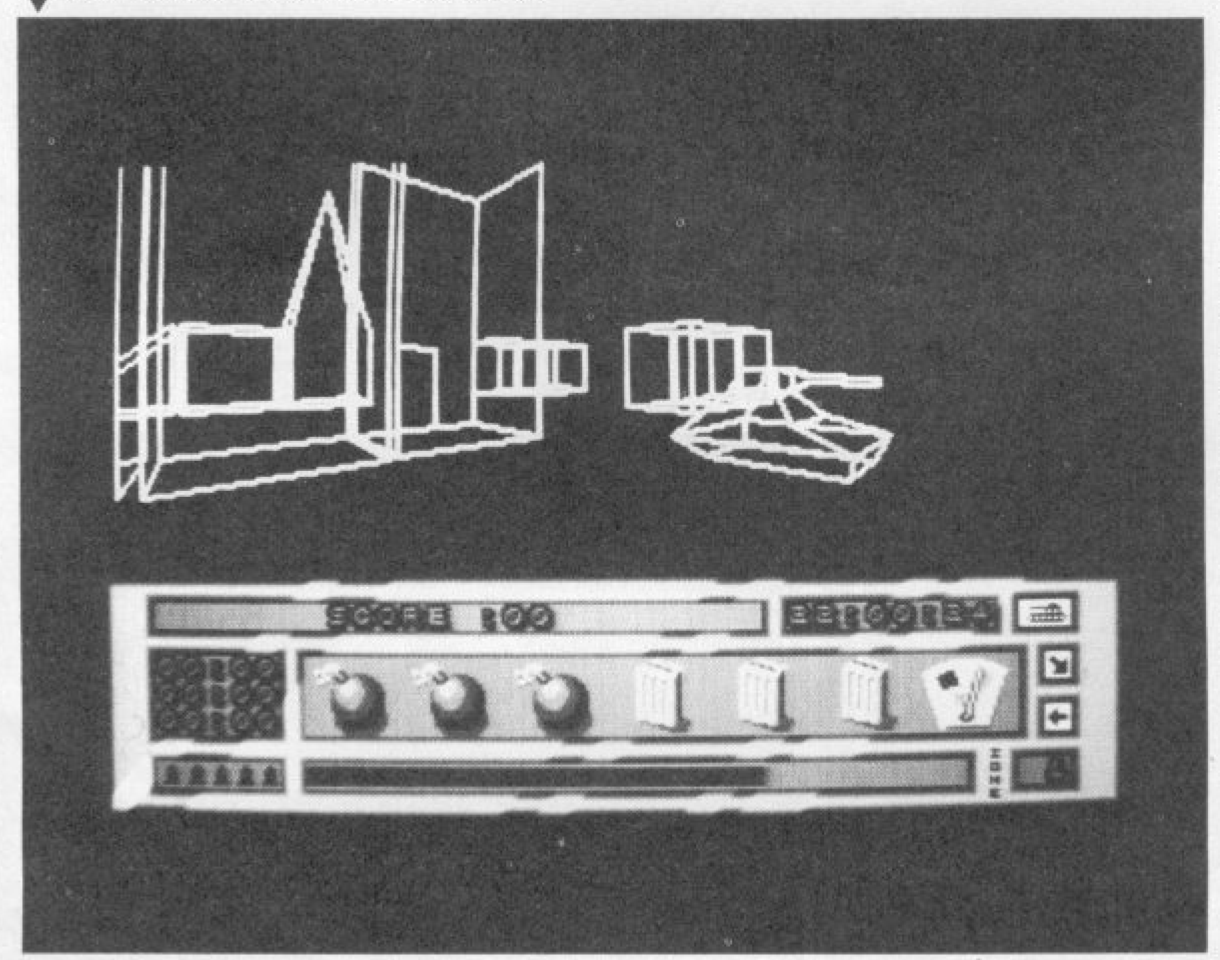
Once inside, you may find extra ammunition or battery packs to help you combat the tanks and guards that seem to be everywhere. Other buildings are 'safe' houses where you can load and save your current position.

Seventeen houses in the complex belonged to a resistance network of scientists, each of whom were linked by computer. Although the scientists have long since disappeared, their computer are still on-line. The problem is how to get into the system.

To help work out the passwords (which are always the name of the scientist who used to live there), you are given a short biography of each scientist. There is an object in each of the houses. This serves as a clue as to whose house you're in, and therefore as to what password to use. Once logged on, there are clues to be found, but first you must decode the information.



▼ *Catch 23 is a great mix of arcade and strategy.*



▲ *The game uses vector graphics similar to Mercenary.*

While roaming the streets, marshes, and forests of the complex you will continually be accosted by military guards. When this happens, you must move your sights over the randomly placed guard and kill him before he gets you.

To get anywhere in *Catch 23*, you'll need to construct a fairly detailed map of the complex. Apart from the scientists' houses, there are some 40 shuttle routes to work out and use, not to mention countless booby-trapped buildings to memorise and avoid.

Catch 23's mixture of strategy and arcade, not to mention some pretty nifty sampled speech, should appeal to a wide spectrum of gamers.

► GRAPHICS	7
► SOUND	8
► VALUE	8
► PLAYABILITY	7

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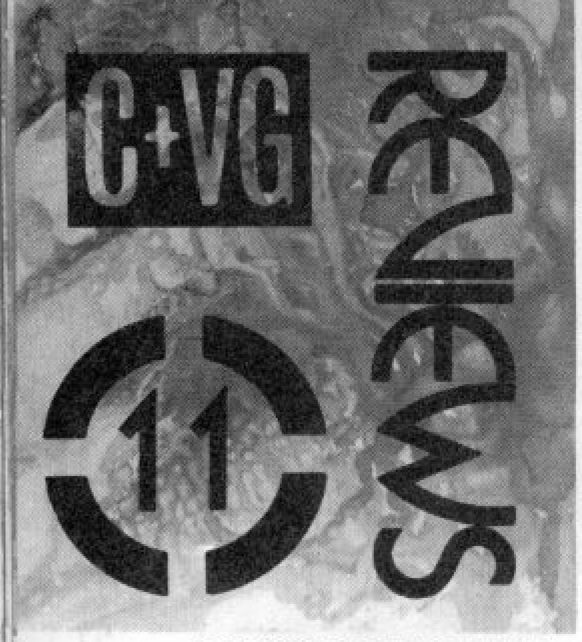
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TERRAMEX

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- ► SUPPLIER: QUICKSILVA
- ► PRICE: T/C
- ► VERSIONS TESTED: ST/AMIGA/ SPECTRUM
- ► REVIEWER: PAUL BOUGHTON

There's a touch of the phoenix about Argus and its associated labels these days. Since the management buy-out, they've put out the excellent *Hunt for Red October* and now *Terramex*.

For my money *Red October* is by far the superior game.

Terramex, however pretty it may look on the ST and Amiga, is perhaps a little run of the mill in the orignality stakes. But it will re-enforce revival prospects.

What we have here is an humorous arcade adventure involving the search for an elusive scientist who has the power to save the world from an untimely date with a meteor.

The scientist, Dr Albert Eyestrain, had predicted this disaster but was greeted with scorn. In a huff, Eyestrain disappeared.

You play the part of one of the five explorers who must find the missing doctor. The game is in two parts, the first of which centres on the search for the Eyestrain, and the second finding the parts of the Positronic Asteroid Deflector.

The five explorers, each of a different nationality, Wilbur Fortisque-Smithe, British, Herr Wolfgang Schmuck, German, Wu Pong, Japanese (sounds more like a Chinaman, don't think?), Big John Caine, American, Henri Beaucoup, French.

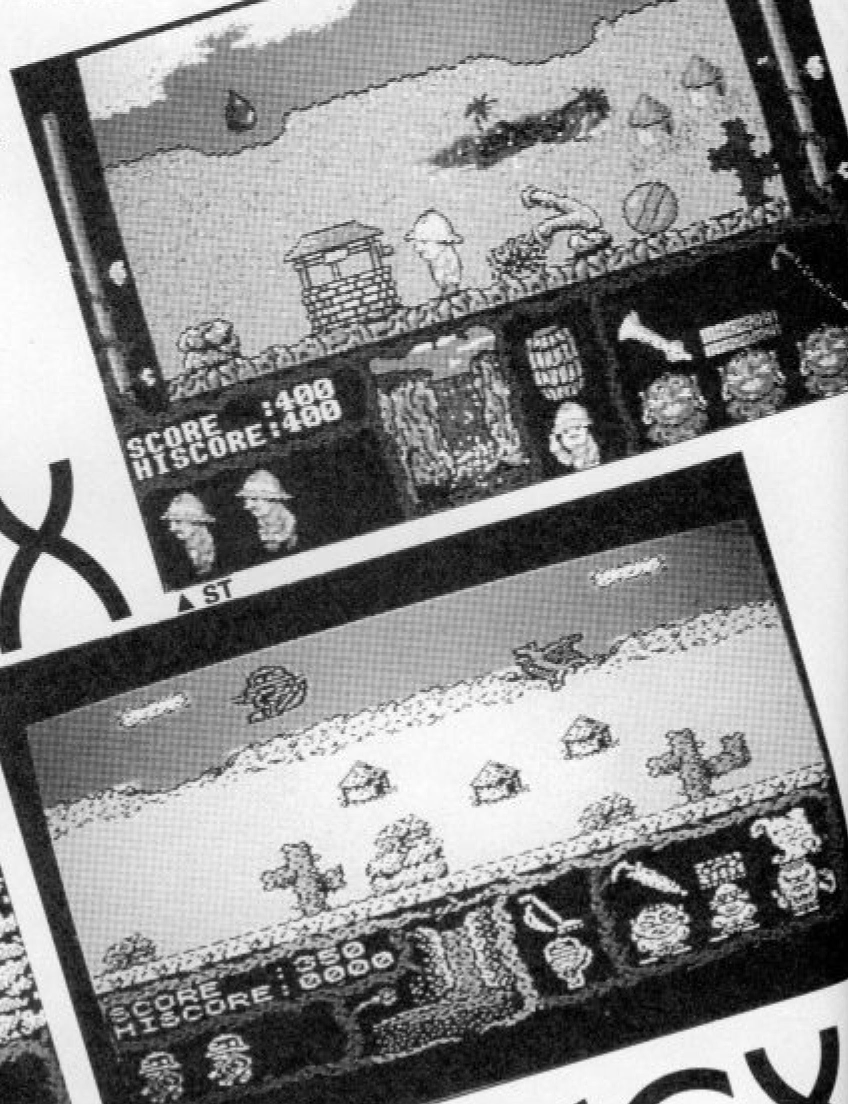
The many objects and useful items which are scattered around the playing area can be used to great effect by all of the explorers. But there are certain items which will be of particular use to various nationalities.

For example, Wu Pong, the Japanese guy, will find the camera and flashgun helpful. I think you can use it for stunning rock-snakes. And Wilbur Fortisque-Smithe could find the cricket ball helpful. What more useful item for an Englishman, eh?

The graphics on the 16-bit machines are excellent. There are also nice touches to the game play. For example, if your character is asked to carry out a dangerous jump he shakes his head. But stick with it and he'll eventually jump.

You'll soon pick up various dos and don'ts. Do use a brolly before jumping off anything.

Don't forget to use a brolly before jumping off anything



▲ ST

▲ MSX

TERRAMEX

▲ Spectrum

▲ ST

and the vacuum cleaner allows you to fly up in to the clouds. Do beware of the snakes that lurk behind rocks.

Your explorer is accompanied by native bearers who carry all the objects and items found.

The Spectrum version is also very playable but – and I suppose this is a bit unfair to compare Spectrum versions with the ST and Amiga – suffers in comparison.

Not the most original game but let's hope it's a portent of good games to come from Argus/Quicksilva.

	ST	AMIGA	SPECTRUM
► GRAPHICS	8	8	7
► SOUND	7	7	5
► VALUE	7	7	7
► PLAYABILITY	7	7	7


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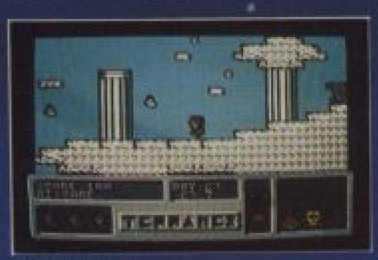
"GRAND SLAM" ENTERTAINMENTS

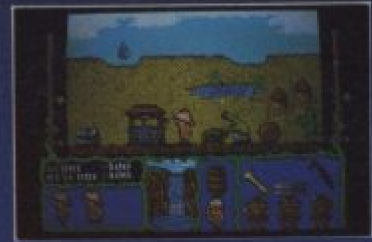
PRESENTS

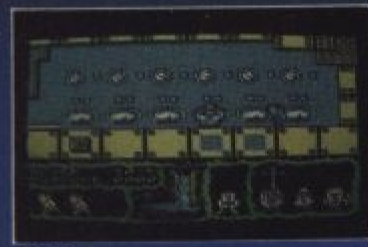
TERRAMEX

THE CARTOON ANIMATION GAME


Spectrum

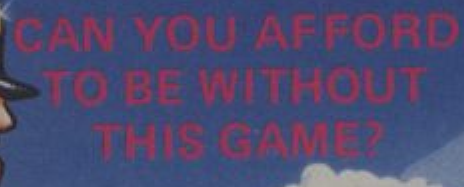

Commodore


Atari ST

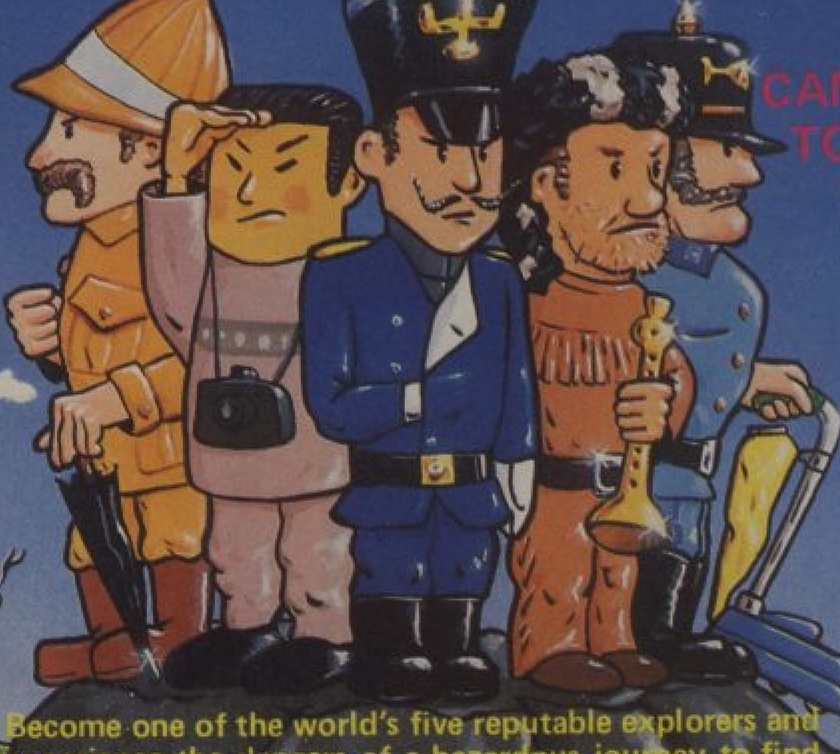

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AMSTRAD CPC Disk [illegible]

CAPTAIN BLOOD



- MACHINES: ATARI ST, COMMODORE AMIGA
- PRICE: ST £19.95, AMIGA £24.95
- VERSION TESTED: ST
- REVIEWER: DAVID

C+VG was the first mag to bring you news of *Captain Blood* with an exclusive preview in our Jan issue. The game is not due out until March but, as luck would have it, a finished copy managed to find its way into the world's best computer mag a month early. So does the finished game fulfill all the promise of the previews? The answer is yes, although *Blood* may not be everyone's cup of tea in the long term. And long term is what you're looking at, if you want to get the most from this massive adventure.

It all started when a down-on-his-luck games programmer named Bob Morlock, bumped into Charles Darwin in the street. Later, over a drink, they get talking about aliens. It turns out that aliens have been here all the time . . . in computer games. As Darwin put it: "They're here. Pac-people are reproducing in millions. They actually exist".

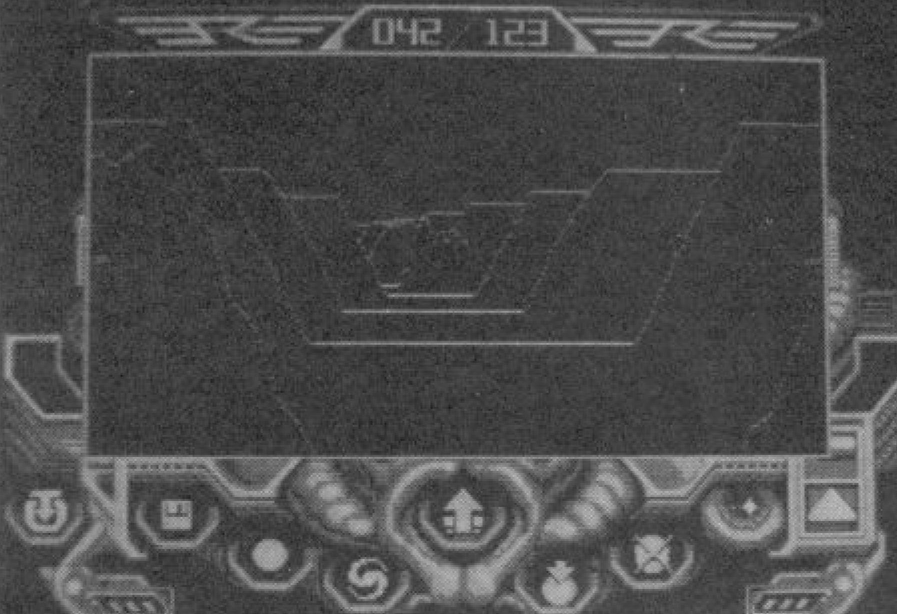
Blood is much more than an the right amounts of arcade and stategy elements to make it interesting and playable. For anyone who missed the preview, you play the part of Captain Blood who is zooming around the galaxy franticly searching for five clones of himself.

There are a mere 32,000 planets, each with uniquely some planets, and they play a key role in helping you find the clones.

But before you can 'talk' to any of the 16 types of alien that hang out around the galaxy, you must first hyperspace to a planet you suspect is inhabited, and then rocket down to the planet's surface. This is where your arcade skills come in useful — most planets are protected by automatic laser defence systems that need only a few seconds to lock into your signal and blast you into oblivion.

The trick is to skim as close to the ground as possible, using mountains and hills to shield you from the defence system's locking scanner. Unfortunately mountains have a frustrating habit of being painful to fly through so you end up dodging and weaving inbetween mountains trying to hug the contours of the land as closely as possible.

Arcade skills are necessary too.



Captain Blood is much more than an adventure.



If a planet is inhabited, the residents are to be found at the end of a canyon — a geological feature common to all the planets in the game.

Talking to aliens is made easy using UPCOM (Universal Protocol Communication). It consists of 128 icons which can be strung together to make quite complex sentences. The concept, design and execution of UPCOM is brilliantly imaginative and, in many ways, far more flexible than any parser could ever be.

By meeting aliens, befriending them, and often by doing them favours, you will gradually be able to piece together all the snippets of information you discover, until you know where to look for one or more of your clones.

Although things can be a little hit or miss until you find your first alien, this shouldn't discourage you from persevering if you like your games big and meaty. If you don't mind spending some considerable time zooming all over the galaxy before you find even your first clone, and fancy graphical treat, check out *Captain Blood*.

GRAPHICS	8
SOUND	8
VALUE	7
PLAYABILITY	7

C+VG REVIEWS 13

MINI PUTT

- ▶ MACHINE: COMMODORE 64
- ▶ ACCOLADE/ ELECTRONIC ARTS
- ▶ PRICE: £9.95 CASSETTE, £14.95 DISK
- ▶ VERSION TESTED: COMMODORE 64
- ▶ REVIEWER: RICHARD HEWISON

We've had a Professional Golf Simulator in the form of *Leaderboard* in its many and varied versions, now Accolade hope to plug in a golfing gap by releasing *Mini-Putt* – the wackiest miniature golf game in the world.

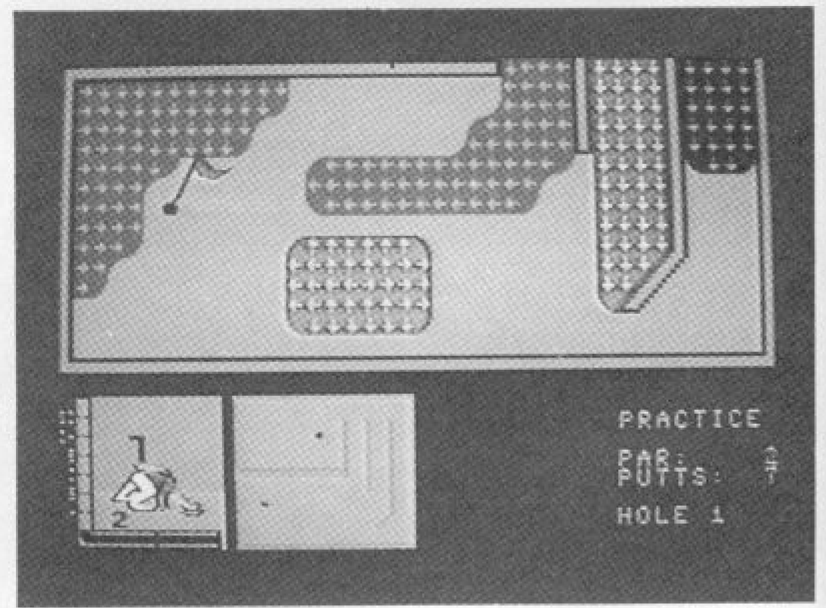
Miniature golf is probably better known in the U.K. as crazy golf, where rookie golfers can play through small courses distinguished by their unique obstacles and hazards.

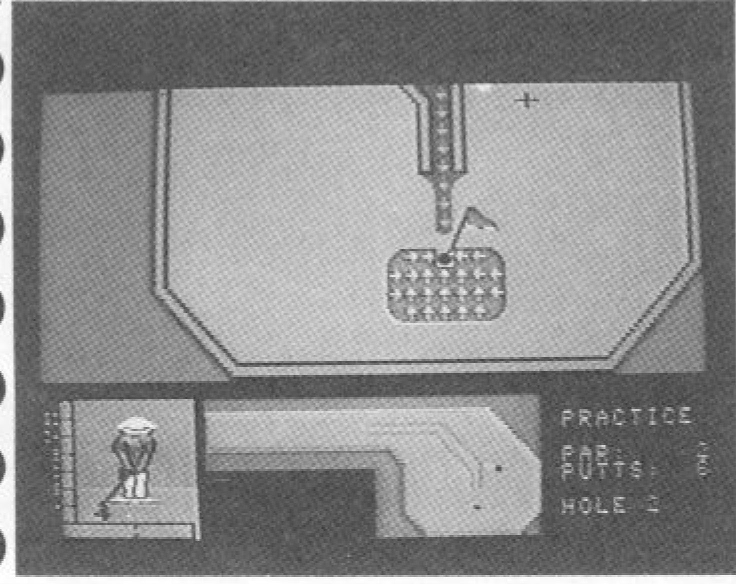
Mini-Putt offers a three window overview of each hole. The largest window shows the current play area and a moveable cursor controlled by joystick which you use to aim your putts. Beneath the main window are the two other windows, including a close up of "Mini-Putt Pete" who is shown swinging his golf club when you make a shot, as well as jumping up the air when you score a hole in one or make a putt under par. The other window is an overview map of the current hole and a simple score board.

There are four 9 hole courses on offer: Deluxe, Classic, Traditional or Challenge. The best for graphics and gameplay is the Classic course, where you have to putt your way past swinging elephant trunks, windmill sails, airplane propellers, a castle, the space shuttle and a cannon which will fire your ball into the hole for you! The other courses use various walls and different terrain on the putting green to divert the ball. Graduation arrows help to indicate the slope of the terrain on each hole. Whilst it adds some accuracy to the game, it does make the graphics look very basic.

The continuing success of golf games is a mystery to me. I mean how many people do you know who regularly head for the golf course on a Saturday morning. It's not exactly the kind of activity you associate with your average computer games player.

I can't help feeling that with Mini Putt the golf boom has gone as far as it is going to. Sure, I know people probably said the same thing when the 'nth Ninja game hit the shops.





The proliferation of golf games does illustrate one of the most aggravating aspects of the games business. The copying, plagiarising, and lack of originality. The rule seems to be if you spot a successful idea copy it. True, Mini Putt does have a fair amount of originality – in that its not just the normal eighteen holes, bunkers, lakes, trees and what have you but adds some of the wackiness of crazy gold.

But generally there is an appauling lack of originality in the games business right now. Witness the developments in the budget business. Codemasters notch up a fair degree of success with the 'simulator' range. Then what happens? Do the other budgeteers attempt to find out what it was about the Coders approach that worked. Do they attempt to emulate their excellent high profile in the national media. No way – they just cynically launch a add the word 'simulator' to their own titles.

If all of the courses were as good as the Classic course, then there would be little to fault. However, the graphics on the others are disappointing and after just a few plays the holes become ridiculously easy.

Mini-Putt is fun to begin with, but the overall challenge soon fades and the multi-load (on the tape version) soon becomes a bit of a pain. You'll soon be yearning for the 30 displays and more professional golf games.

Don't be putt off of Accolade games by the disappointment of Mini Putt. They are one of the



▶ GRAPHICS	6
▶ SOUND	5
▶ VALUE	6
▶ PLAYABILITY	7





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PLATO

- MACHINES: CBM 64/SPECTRUM AMSTRAD
- SUPPLIER: OCEAN
- PRICES: £9.95 CASSETTE, £14.95 DISK
- VERSION TESTED: CBM 64
- REVIEWER: EUGENE LACEY

"The first casualty of war is innocence" was *Platoon's* message – a movie telling the story of five fresh faced American teenagers thrust into the gory hell of combat in the Vietnam war zone.

Most people thought it was a joke when Ocean said they were coding a game around *Platoon* – reasoning that it was one thing churning out naff film tie-ins of *James Bond* and the like, but quite another thing to cheapen such a good and "serious" film.

Whatever your views on this – there is no denying that as a game Platoon is an extremely well thougth out and challenging arcade adventure style game. Thankfully it is not merely an excuse for video gook bashing – as it might so easily have been.

When you examine the whole package – the poster, audio copy of the film's theme tune "Tracks of My Tears" and the way in which the game has been done you have to acknowledge that the subject matter has been treated extremely sensitively.

The game is split up into six sections – loosely following the plot of the film.



▼ *Blast the Viet Cong in the jungle*



▲ *VC commandoes confront you in the tunnel*

The opening sequence is set in the *Jungle* with Viet Cong guerrilla's leaping from trees, and setting booby traps for your five strong platoon as they seek out the VC village. A bridge has to be blown to stop the VC from pursuing you to the village. The maze-like jungle is pretty dense and I strongly recommend the map – as it is all very similar looking and difficult to find your way around. You have five men and your morale barometer goes down every time a Cong sniper kills one of them.

Once you reach the *Village* you have to search the huts to find items you will need in the next section. Again you have to

TR

- MACHINES: CBM 64/SPECTRUM PLUS 3/IBM
- SUPPLIER: CASCADE
- PRICES: CBM 64 £9.95/£14.95)/ SPECTRUM (£8.95)/PLUS 3 (£12.95) IBM (£19.95)
- VERSIONS TESTED: CBM 64
- REVIEWER: PAUL BOUGHTON

Is *Traz* what the world really wants? Who needs another Break-out/Arkanoid/ Addictaball/Tonic Tiles clone? Well, Cascade obviously think you do?

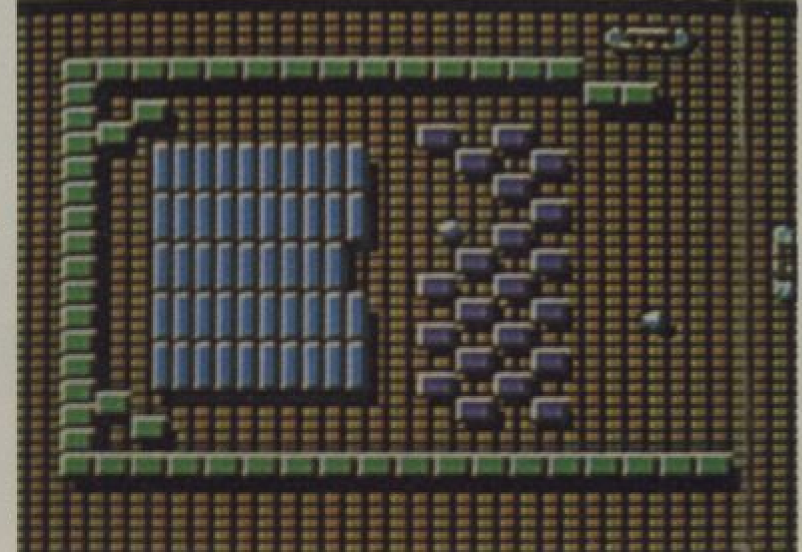
My first impluse was to not bother with the game. It was the seen it, played it, bored with it syndrome? But I gave it a go, Joe – and I'm still playing. Just why is it these types of games are just so damn playable?

Traz has a few new twists to the bat, bricks and ball formula and, most importantly, a construction kit which allows you to design your own scenes.

There's even a silly plot to go with the game. *Traz* is a computer controlled prison made up of 64 screens or perhaps cells would be a better word. These 64 screens are arranged on an 8X8 grid and you escape by clearing the screens.

So far so good. The screens are really neat and complex with some new and original touches such as up to four bats to control. For example, two at the bottom of the screen and two at the top. Or at the bottom of the screen and along one side. There's even a screen where two bats are positioned almost above each other, with the lower one moving at a slightly different speed. That can be confusing. In addition there are the usual oddities which emerge to interfere with play and cause a bad deflection.

▼ *Watch out for question marks*



OON

a fox hole. It is pitch black and the enemy are creeping all around you. Now is the time to use your flares to pick out the Cong. Go easy on the ammo though as this is limited.

If you survive the bunker sequence you will find yourself back in the *Jungle*. This time your objective is simply to escape from there before it is blown sky high. This is also a race against the clock – with a two minute limit – as well as a test of finding your way out.

The final conflict pitches you against the shell shocked Sergeant Barnes. 'Nam has proved too much for him and he has turned on his own men – bombarding them with a constant barrage of grenades and gun fire. Five grenades must score direct hits in order to eliminate Barnes and win the game.

I enjoyed playing *Platoon* immensely. Many gamers may be put off by the toughness of the first level and put it down – which would be a mistake as it is an arcade adventure of great challenge and ultimately much satisfaction as well. Ocean has made a competent job of what appeared to be one of the most difficult films to turn into a game.



▲ Blow the bridge to slow the enemy

keep an eye on morale – the barometer dips if you shoot any unarmed villagers.

The *Tunnel* network is an impressive piece of game design incorporating a split screen 3D and map view of the complex. Again you are searching for items that you will need later – a compass and some flares – but there is the added complication of red herrings. The VC are down there in the tunnel with you – hiding under the water with knives in hand – just waiting to silently pick off your platoon man by man.

The *Bunker* re-creates the images of the film more vividly for me than the rest of the game. You now find yourself in

- ▶ GRAPHICS 7
- ▶ SOUND 6
- ▶ VALUE 7
- ▶ PLAYABILITY 8



▽ Almost ready for the mad Sergeant Barnes



AZ

And then there are the question marks. These are the real wild cards in the pack.

For a start it's impossible to know what they will do. And believe me they can do some weird things. One may give limited fire power to your bat, another may rob you of all control over the paddle, others make the ball disappear only to reemerge seconds later on another part of the screen. And the strangest of all is the one that makes the ball swerve, curve and move in the most unpredictable manner.

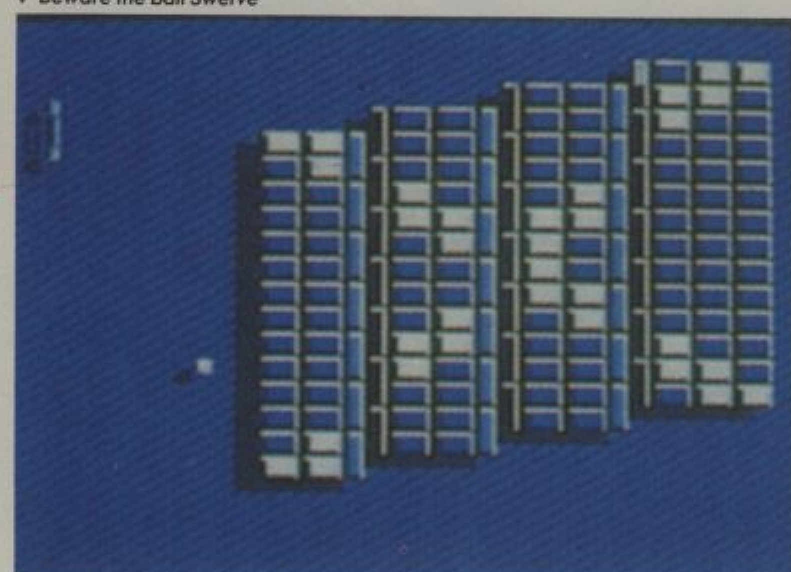
The two player option is also good fun. It appears that you're playing as a team but, in fact, you soon find yourself trying to serve up some difficult shots. To add to the confusion, the control of the bat continually swap. So you've got to keep a close eye on the game.

You get a sound clue when control changes and the bats change colour. Confusing, eh? And there's no set time between changes. Control can change and the swap the next instance.

The construction set could be the main selling point of *Traz*, especially if you've bought any other versions of this style of game. I constructed some pretty strange screens. I thought they were brilliant designs and hugely playable. Others thought different. But that's life.

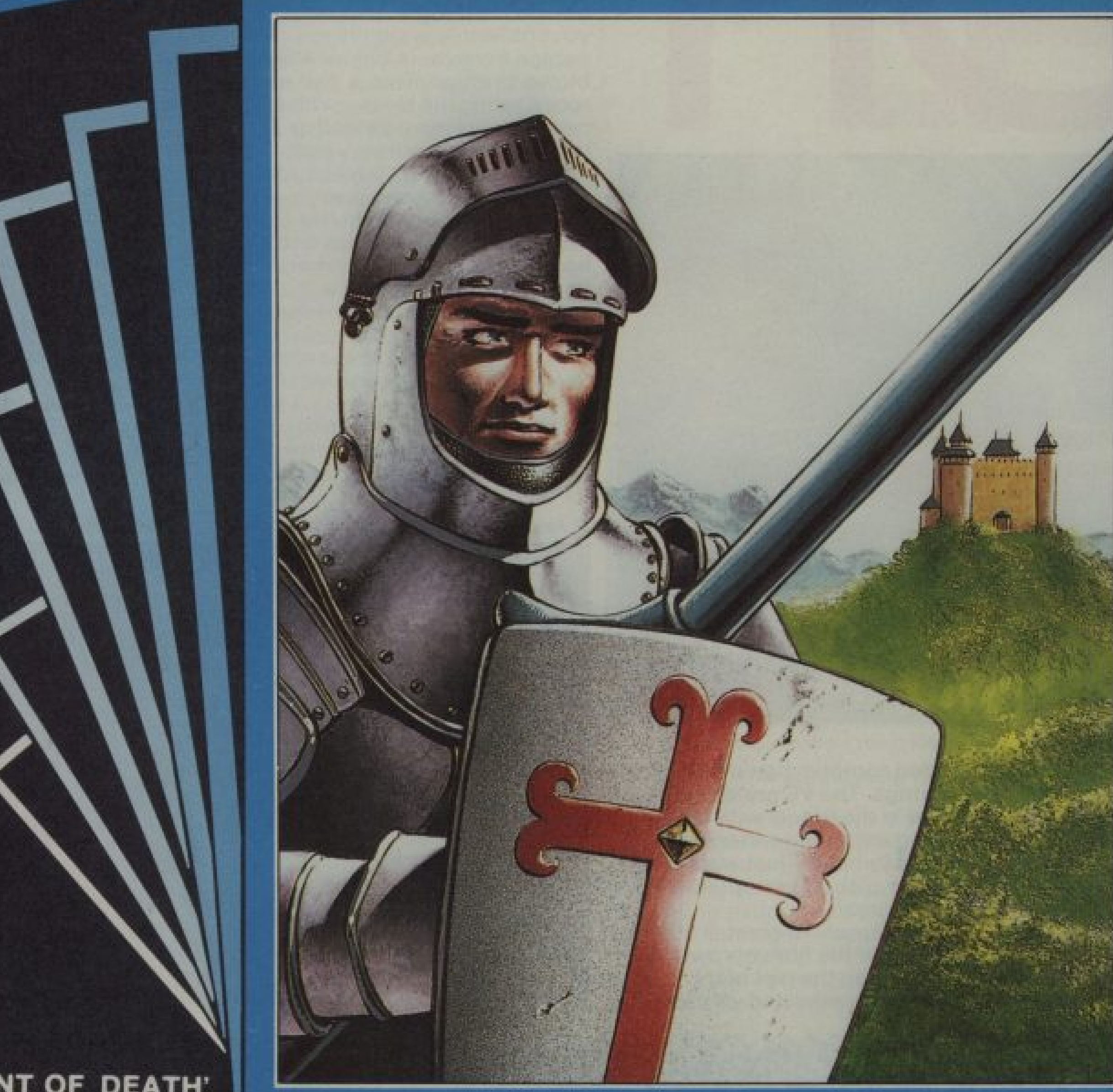
The screens are all inventive, from tropical trees to adverts for *Ace 2* and the nice part is that you don't start on the same screen each time. Variety prevents boredom.

▼ Beware the ball Swerve

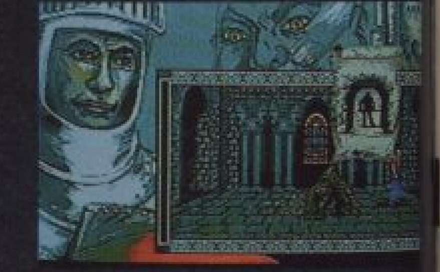


- ▶ GRAPHICS 8
- ▶ SOUND 8
- ▶ VALUE 8
- ▶ PLAYABILITY 9

Lee Enfield in THE TOURNAMENT OF DEATH



LEE ENFIELD IN 'THE TOURNAMENT OF DEATH' is the second in The Time Troubleshooter Series in which our hero finds himself in the 13th century. His adventure takes place in the Castle of the Count of Savoy where the Holy Shroud, one of the world's great religious relics, is kept under close guard by the soldiers of Yellow Shadow, Lee's sworn enemy.



Lee has been instructed to find this relic before Yellow Shadow destroys it. He will need a lot of courage and skill to fight his way through numerous rooms and hidden passages as specially trained guards, foot soldiers and even bears bar his way.

His chance of succeeding is very low but Lee Enfield is the man who likes a challenge and there are objects to find which will aid him in his mission ... So, it's up to Lee to prove them wrong!



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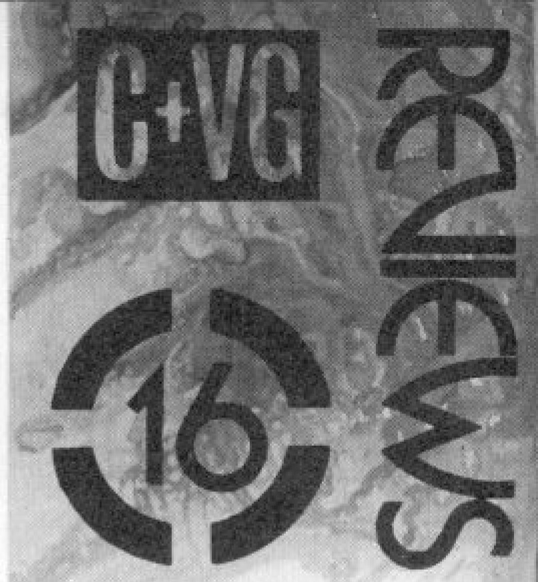






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SUBBATTLE SIMULATOR



► MACHINES: CBM 64/128
► SUPPLIER: EPYX
► PRICE: £9.99 (CASSETTE) £14.99 (DISK)
► REVIEWER: STEVE BADSEY

"So, there I was, captain of a German submarine in the first week of World War Two, hunting for British merchant ships in the English Channel. After two days' patrol a lookout reported smoke to the north.

"My binoculars showed only clear blue sea, so I followed his directions. We pursued for an hour with the lookout getting more excited. Suddenly there was an almighty crash as we went aground.

"I checked the map, and we had just sailed 50 miles inland from Brighton. The lookout still reported the convoy, presumably sailing down the main runway at Gatwick airport. I took another look through the binoculars. Nothing but ocean. I must get them fixed."

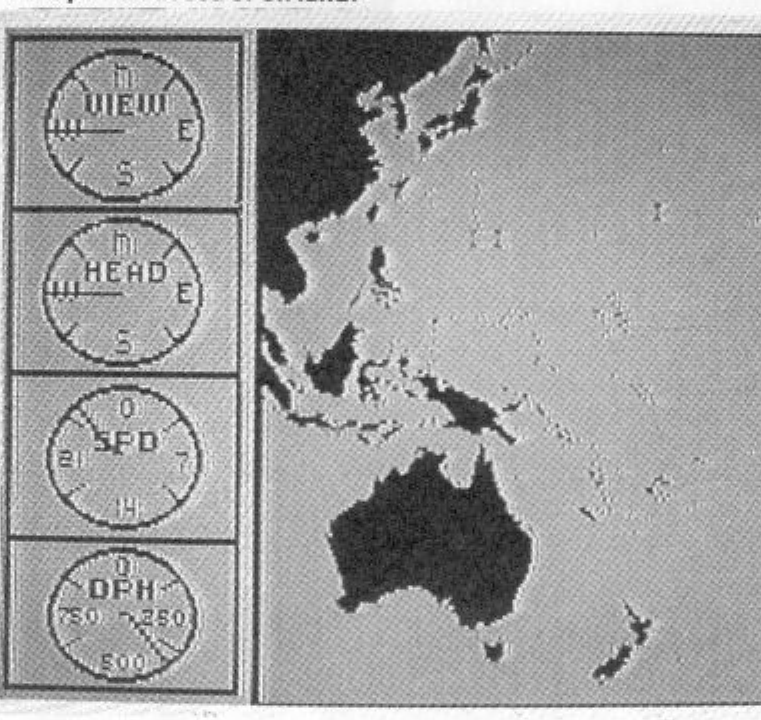
Of all the attack submarine games on the market, *Subbattle Simulator* promises the most. In charge of a World War Two submarine, the player must master the problems of manoeuvre and torpedo attack.

There is a training scenario, a set of special missions including picking up aircrew at sea and landing agents on enemy islands, and a "wartime command" scenario in which if you survive your first patrol you move on to a better submarine and continue your career throughout the war. There are four levels of difficulty, and a selection of either American submarines in the Pacific or German in the North Sea and Atlantic. Your submarine can be attacked from the air, and you must recognise which aircraft are hostile. The earlier subs really do have worse handling and poorer torpedoes than the later models.

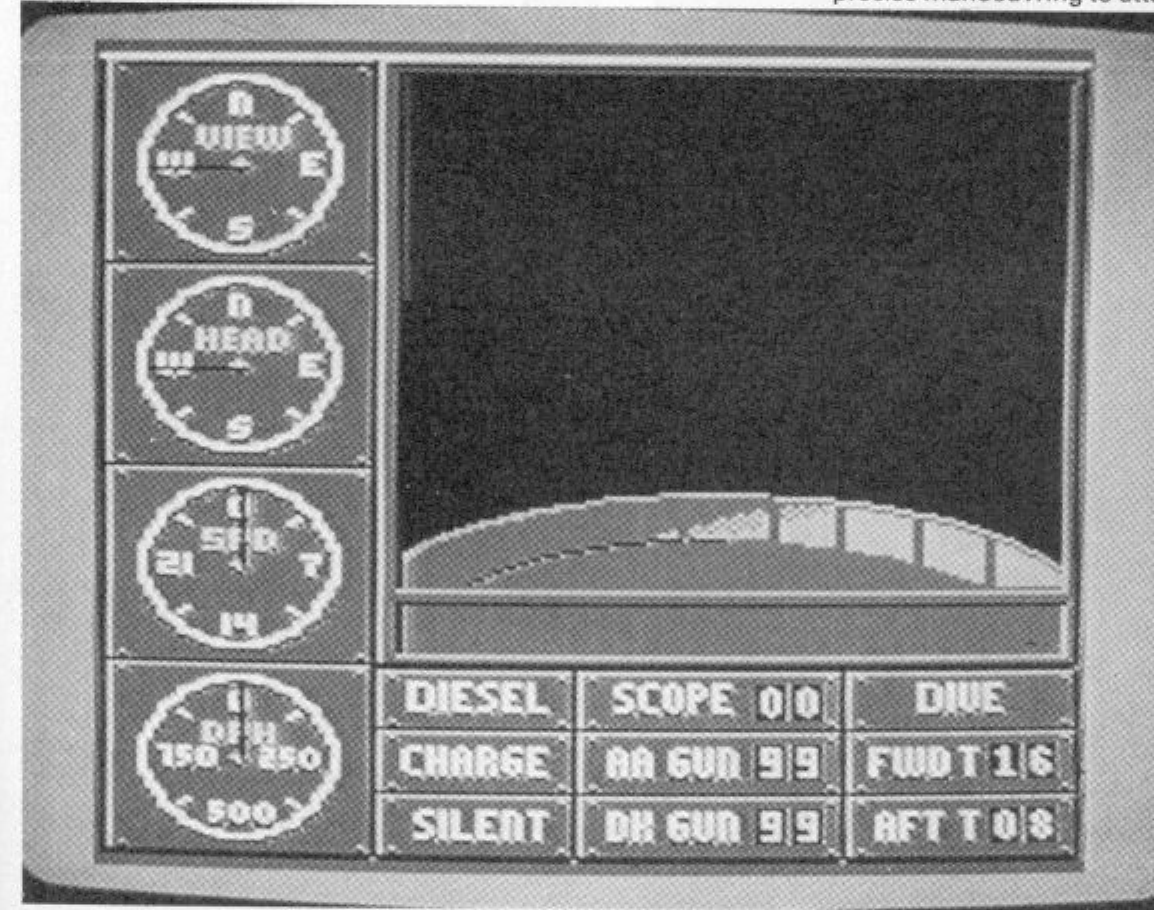
It sounds too good to be true. It is. Apart from showing the ocean when you are sailing on dry land – or even worse, almost on top of an enemy ship – the program is almost unplayable.

Course is set on a dial with a joystick, and is accurate only to about five degrees. Precision navigation, one of the main skills of a submarine, is impossible.

▼ Maps – all at sea or on land?



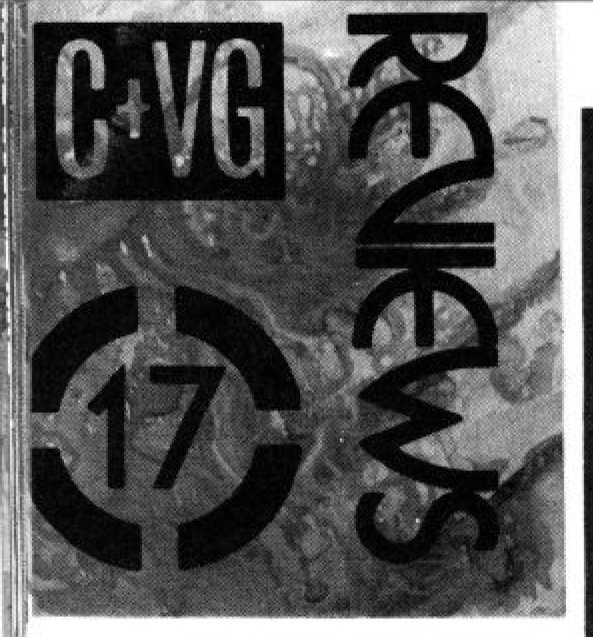
▼ An enemy in view.

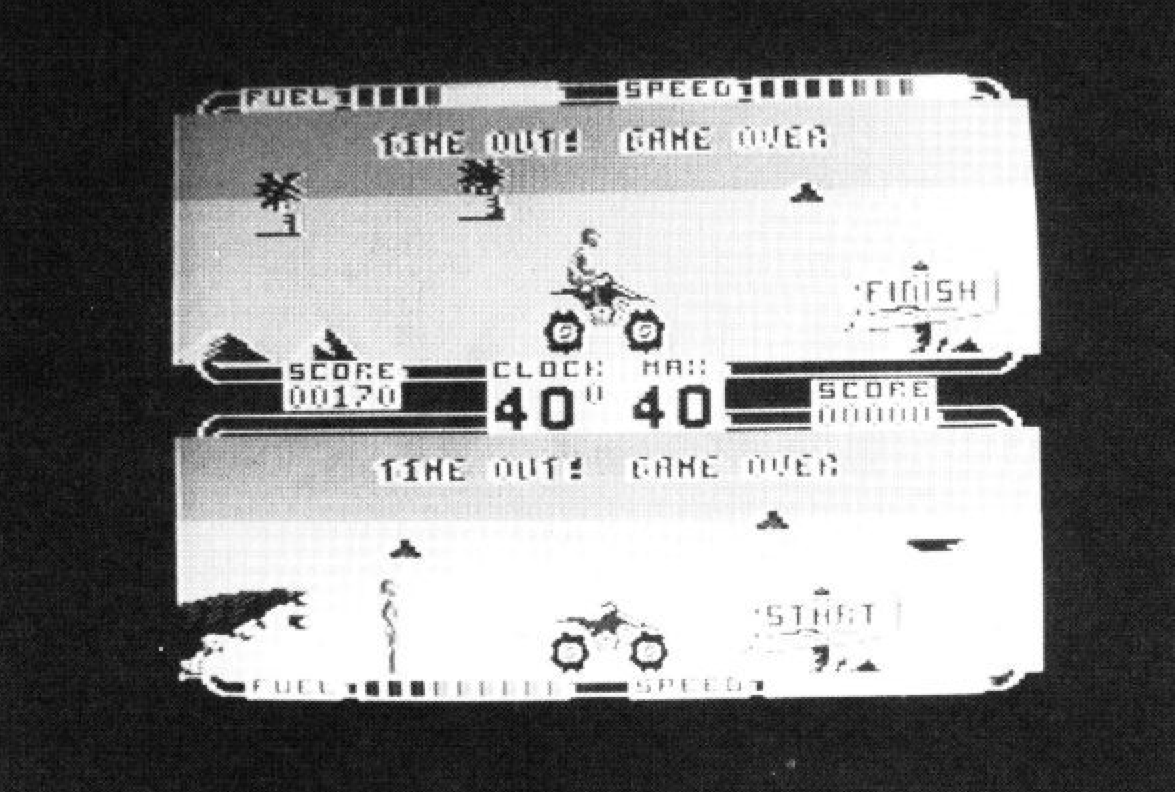


Submarine work alternates between long days of patrolling, hours of stalking a convoy, and minutes of very precise manoeuvring to attack or escape. For a game some form of time compression and a way of "zooming" in and out of larger scale maps is essential. The method chosen by *Subbattle Simulator* makes the game almost impossible. Time compression is reasonable up to one (realtime) second equals 30 seconds, but then it jumps to ten minutes, and to four hours, reverting each time to the smallest scale map. This means that you either have to run 12 day-long patrols in the ten minute mode, or speed up and risk that a degree or two out in your navigation, multiplied by eight hours' sailing, will put you in Tokyo harbour in two seconds. Even worse, once you have sighted a convoy the computer, not you, calls "battle stations" and locks you in tactical mode, with 30 seconds as the fastest speed. The basic submarine tactic of stalking a convoy all day to attack at night is not possible.

Subbattle Simulator is potentially a very good game. If it did what it is supposed to do it would be highly realistic and very playable indeed. But it needs a lot more playtesting and debugging. I look forward to a second, improved version.

► GRAPHICS	6
► REALISM	5
► PLAYABILITY	2
► VALUE	4





ATV SIMULATOR

► MACHINES: C64/AMSTRAD/SPECTRUM
► SUPPLIER: CODE MASTERS
► PRICE: £1.99
► VERSION TESTED: C64
► REVIEWING: IAN

ATV Simulator brings together all the essential elements of motorbike cross-country scrambling and then proceeds to become one of the worst simulations I've seen.

The game has a total of six different playing areas; Sand Duning, Grass Tracking, Icebergs, Desert, Tropicana and Swamp. All of these scroll from left to right and you are instructed to out-manoeuvre an assortment of obstacles including rocks, fences, icebergs, mounds and ball bouncing seals.

The screen is split into two windows – the top window shows player one's progress through the course and the second player two's. Both players must compete against the clock.

Any player who fails to reach the finishing line within the given time (which changes according to the difficulty of each course) will lose and forfeit the race. The remaining player is permitted to proceed through the remaining courses, until he/she fails to complete the course within the given time.

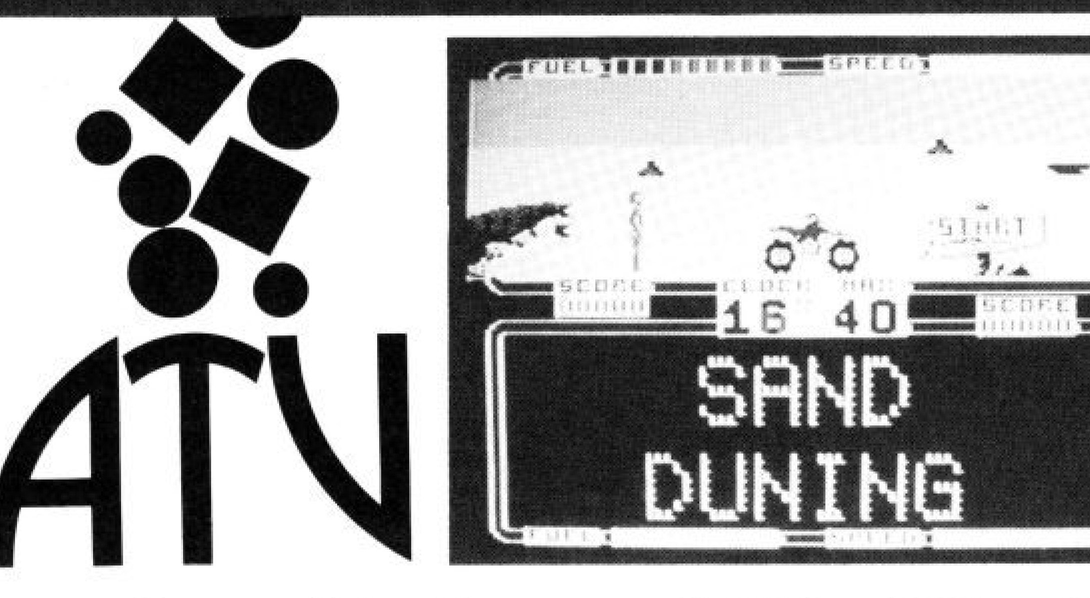
Controlling your bike or buggy is achieved by using either the keyboard or the joystick.

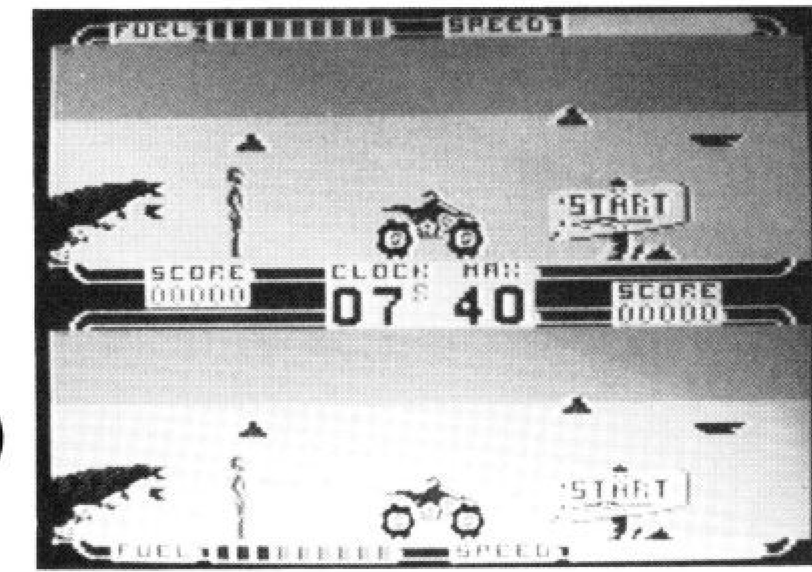
If you successfully complete any course within the given time limit you are awarded a score bonus which rapidly clocks-up your score.

The graphics for ATV are feeble and weak and the sound is no better. Playability is almost non-existent because of very poor joystick and keyboard responses.

I don't know whether Code Masters intended ATV to have been a rival to Mastertronic's *Kikstart*, or maybe it's just a slight coincidence that it turned out to look and sound almost like it. Well anyway, one thing that I have learnt from reviewing this game is . . . never, under any circumstances, judge a game by the cover or screen shots on the inlay card . . . but read the reviews instead!

► GRAPHICS	5
► SOUND	5
► PLAYABILITY	4
► VALUE	4





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- MACHINE: CBM 64
- SUPPLIER: ZEPPELIN GAMES
- PRICE: £2.99
- REVIEWER: EUGENE LACY

Zeppelin Games is one of a brace of new companies determined to give Mastertronic and Code Masters a run for their money in the fiercely competitive budget games business.

Their first offering for the 64 is a tough shoot 'em up called *Zybex* and it has to be judged as a pretty good game by anyone's standards.

ZYBEX

Owing an obvious debt to games like *Gryzor,* here we have a horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up — progressively difficult and with the facility to build up your jet-pack-man fighter.

The storyline isn't going to win any prizes for sci fi originality. It concerns two rebels, Rinser and Cassalana, who have been sentence to relentlessly travel the universe blasting aliens and discovering new worlds.

To release the unfortunate space twins from this tedium you will have to remove the 'death rings' from their necks. To do this you have to penetrate the defences of several planetary systems and retrieve a Zybex crystal form each one. At the end the final level is all the all powerful Zybex crystal — cop this one and Bob's your uncle, Rinser and Cassalana are off down the pub without a care in the world.

The best thing about *Zybex* is the two player facility. You and a friend can take on the aliens together. The possibilities for strategy here are limitless. It is reminiscent of *Gauntlet* in that you can shout to each other to take the lead, watch out above, below or behind. It's team work against the aliens — which makes a welcome change from the solitary business of wasting 'em by all by your self.



▲ *The rampant worm threatens danger.*

Zybex employs the fairly standard technique of flying through various icons to pick up the extra weapons. Extra weapons to be picked up are those familiar rotating weapons — in this case they are called 'Orbiting Defence Pods'. There are also the '8-Way (It is what it sounds like), the Wall and the Rail Gun. The graphics of the missiles were not quite as good as they might have been — looking more like out of scale triangles than anything else.

The aliens compensate for this. There is one excellent alien near the beginning of the first level — a splendidly colourful rampant worm. As is traditional, this monster must be destroyed a segment at a time.

Plumbing the depths of this game will reward the player with other weird and wonderful aliens and monsters. There are the character-kaleidoscopic formations of aliens that do a little dance in front of you and then zoom of screen in a neat line hardly giving you a chance to blast them.

The backgrounds through which all this blasting takes place is also of a reasonable standard. There are pyramids and rocky craters, diamond landscapes, and even a city skyline made up of huge green phallic-like buildings.

Another bonus mark for *Zybex* is the speed at which you can restart the game after you have been killed. It really is instant — a couple of quick fires on the joystick button and you are back onto the action.

This is a thumping good start from Zeppelin. I will be checking their next couple of releases to see if they can maintain the standard.

GRAPHICS	5
SOUND	6
VALUE	7
PLAYABILITY	7

▼ *The monsters threaten to mask our dynamic duo.*



The Ultimate Maze Challenge

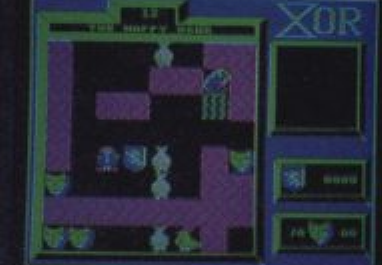
There are no random events in **XOR**'s labyrinthine palace and there is no premium on hand-eye coordination. You have all the time in the world to work out the precise nature of the hazards you encounter. Logical thinking, strategy and tactical problem solving are all part of the **XOR** experience. And **XOR** is not simply about finding solutions. If you can solve the entire puzzle (15 levels plus an encrypted anagram), you qualify to be a member of the **ORDER of XOR**, with a certificate and a badge to prove it.

"...this is one of the most compulsive, cunning and attractive programs I've seen for some time! .... the game is superb - a very classy original twist on the basic maze theme" A+B Computing *(as reviewed on a BBC micro)*

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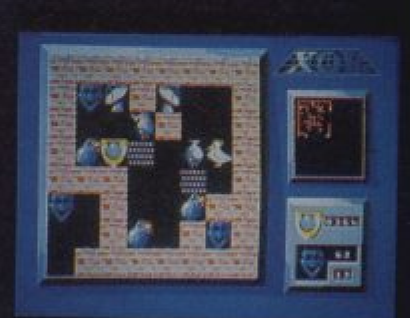






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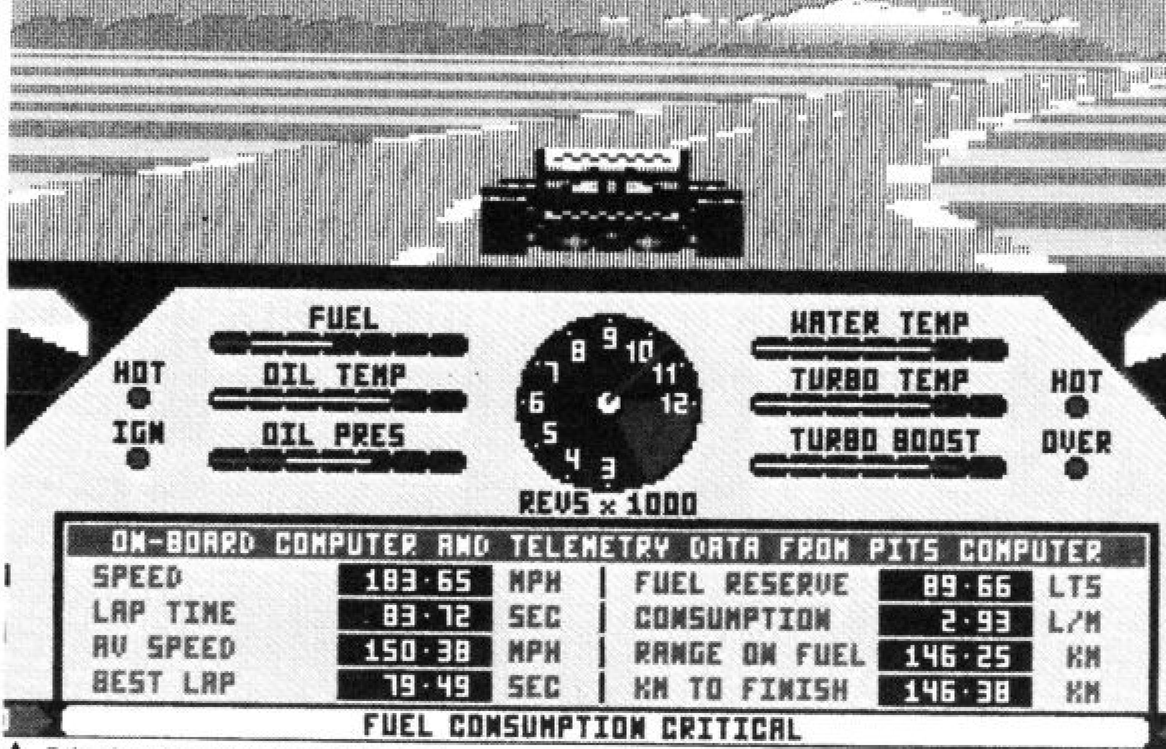


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▲ *Take the racing line through the bend.*

NIGEL MANSELL

- ► MACHINE: SPECTRUM
- ► SUPPLIER: MARTECH
- ► PRICE: £9.99
- ► VERSION TESTED: SPECTRUM
- ► REVIEWER: PAUL BOUGHTON

Well poor old Nigel Mansell didn't make it as the Formula One World champion last season. But Nigel Mansell's Grand Prix is certainly a winner.

It's a game you've certainly got to work at to get the most from it. The programmers have done their utmost to make this game as accurate as possible. Try and remember that you're in the cockpit of a Canon Williams Honda Formula One mean machine and these babies need careful handling. Get them too hot and bothered and then they breakdown on you. Treat them right and you're in a dream machine.

I made this mistake at first, ignoring the controls and just driving. You soon learn to pay a little more attention to the cockpit controls.

The cockpit display is rather overwhelming. There's a lot to monitor. I found it a little confusing at first. While studying the controls, I sometimes forgot to steer. Bang! Keep your eyes on the track.

So here's a rundown of the cockpit controls:

Rev Counter — This shows the speed of the engine but not how fast the car is moving on the track. If the revs are too low the engine labours and power could be lost, too high and there is a danger of the engine overheating.

Fuel — This is a pretty obvious gauge.

Oil Temperature — If the oil temperature in the sump gets too much then there could be mechanical problems.

Water Temperature — Water keeps the engine cool. If it overheats there again could be mechanical problems.

Turbo Temperature — The turbo charger boosts the pressure of the air/fuel mixture which is forced into the inlet manifold of the engine. The effect of this, put simply, is to increase the car's engine power.

Turbo Boost — This shows the pressure of the fuel/air mixture entering the engine. Although it's very useful to suddenly be able to boost the power of your engine, there is a drawback which you must consider carefully. Using the turbo boost — of which there are four settings ranging from minimum to maximum — it is very heavy on fuel consumption. It has to be used very carefully and with a great deal of thought. It's no good zooming into the lead only to run out of fuel before the finishing line.

Gears — The car has six forward gears.

The onboard computer displays additional information transmitted to your car from the pits. It consists of speed (in MPH), lap time, average speed, your best speed, fuel reserve (your car carries 195 litres which should be enough to complete a race of 190 miles), fuel consumption, range on fuel (the distance you could go on fuel reserve), distance to race finish and a radio link with the pits.

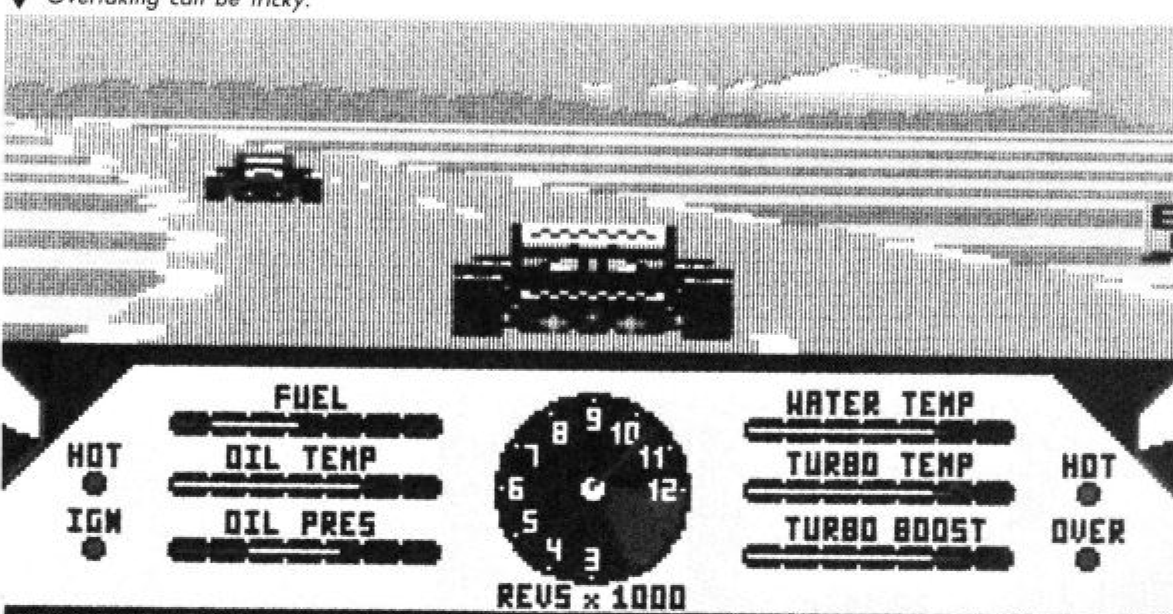
There are 16 race tracks for you to select from or you take them one by one to try and become world champ. Apparently, the circuits are accurate. So you can rev up around the world from Brazil to Japan and Monaco to Detroit.

I'm no Nigel Mansell when it comes to racing but this sim gives you a taste of life in the fast lane.

Experience it.

► GRAPHICS	8
► SOUND	6
► VALUE	8
► PLAYABILITY	9

▼ *Overtaking can be tricky.*





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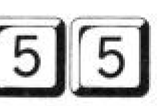
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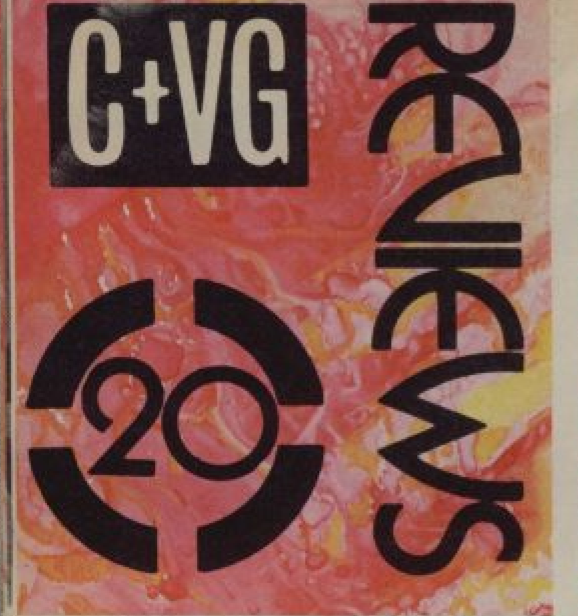
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DAN DARE II

- MACHINES: SPECTRUM 48/128/ PLUS 2/PLUS 3/AMSTRAD
- SUPPLIER: VIRGIN
- PRICE: £7.95
- VERSIONS TESTED: SPECTRUM/ AMSTRAD
- REVIEWER: PAUL BOUGHTON

Heroes don't come more heroic than this. Dan Dare, clean-cut, square-jawed, stiff-upper-lipped, all British good guy who will never let you down.

He's the sort of chum you need in a tight corner – when the Mekon, evil scientific mastermind leader of the Treens, is threatening to overrun the Good Ship Earth with a genetically engineered race of Supertreens, for instance

These Supertreens are kept in Plexiglass Life Support Systems throughout the four levels of the Mekon's spaceship. He must discover and explore all the levels, find all the Supertreens, sabotage their control boxes to activate the level destruct sequence.

However, the destruct sequence starts from the very first moment Dan blasts the control box. And that means he only has limited time to destroy all the other controls and escape to the next level.

If you don't want to play the good guy, you can take on the character of the Mekon. He also must locate the Supertreens and then activate them. Dan Dare's arrival in the craft has activated the destruct sequence, so he – or it – is also up against time.

The Mekon's ship is like a huge maze, filled with Treen guards on jetbikes equipped with lasers, forcefields, lasers and, of course, your own space pilot pals.

The Mekon vessel is shown in cross-section the main features of which are:

Ventilation ducts – used to circulate air around the spacecraft and the air currents can be used to help your progress around. Of course, trying to move against the air flow is a little difficult.

Force field – these seal off and protect areas of the craft. They are controlled by one of four forcefield generators.

Lasers – these laser cannons will rapidly drain your energy. Best to avoid them.

Air lifts – used to deploy Treen guard squads only.

Artificial gravity generators – although harmless they can make movement awkward.

Blast doors – these doors will open when blasted. But they will re-close within a few seconds.

Force field generator computers – these control current around the ship and can be destroyed.



▲ *Desperate measures for Dan on the Spectrum.*

Refuse crushers – designed to remove waste products from the ship, the crushers are very dangerous to pass.

In a straight head to head (rather unfair, I know) I plump for the Spectrum version as the victor. It's colourful and – although at times it was a little difficult to distinguish the good guys from the bad – it was more playable and I was able to get further into the game.

The Amstrad *Dare,* while quite nice to look at, felt a little "dead" on play.

Although quite playable in a fairly unoriginal way, I still feel Dan Dare and the Mekons as a concept has a lot more to offer than this game achieves. Will there be a *Dan Dare III?*

	SPECTRUM	AMSTRAD
GRAPHICS	7	8
SOUND	5	6
VALUE	7	7
PLAYABILITY	8	7

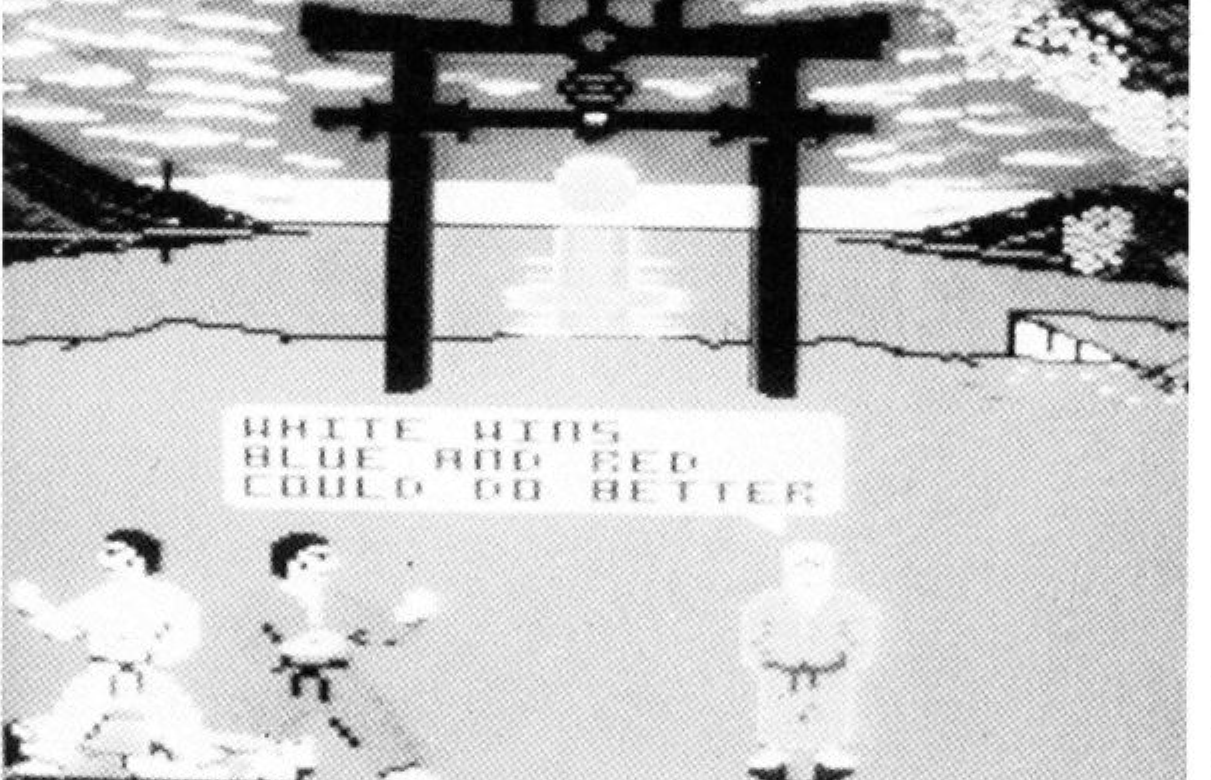
▼ *Dan dares uncharted areas, again on the Spectrum.*



▼ *A Treen bites the dust on the Amstrad.*




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...Could the final P.I.N. number be here?...
...Running into more trouble?...
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Impossible Mission is a Registered Trade Mark of EPYX Inc. EPYX is a Registered Trade Mark No. 1195270. ©1988 EPYX Inc. All rights reserved. Manufactured and distributed under licence from Epyx Inc. by U.S. Gold Limited, 2/3 Holford Way, Holford, Birmingham B6 7AX. Screens from Atari ST and Commodore 64 versions.
EPYX



▲ Out for the count.

leave you alone. If this happens there's rich pickings on points. But, then again, they may both turn on you. Another time they may not take the offensive, prefering to adopt a more defensive strategy.

INTERNATIONAL KARATE PLUS

- ► MACHINES: CBM64/SPECTRUM/AMSTRAD
- ► SUPPLIER: SYSTEM 3
- ► PRICE: £9.99
- ► VERSION TESTED: AMSTRAD
- ► REVIEWER: PAUL BOUGHTON

You should have been there! The backflip across the screen defied description. The move was only marred by this clown in a red suit delivering a headbutt straight in my kisser. I was out for the count.

There are very few games around nowadays that make your Amstrad smile. There's *Gryzor*, of course, and . . . well, that's it really. Thank God for *International Karate Plus*.

The power play is pretty much the accepted standard for martial arts games – a wide variety of moves and a battle for points. However, System 3 has added a new twist – the third fight, the joker in the pack which means that you daren't turn your back unless you want a fist or foot smacked into it.

There is also a new bonus screen in which you must deflect bouncing balls with a shield. But more of that later.

Your player has 17 joystick moves, ranging from the previously mentioned spectacular backflip to flying leap kick, front face punch to crouching stomach punch and headbutt to reverse face kick. So you can see there're plenty of options when it comes to taking your opponents apart.

A match consists of two fight rounds and a bonus round. You can either have one player against two computer-controlled fighters or two human-controlled men fighting each other and the computer fighter.

Points are awarded for punches, kicks and butts. An animated judo judge appears every thiry seconds to announce the current positions of the fighters. Every third round you get – if you're winning – to play the bonus round.

As I said before, in this you must deflect balls, which bounce from both sides of the screen, with a hand-held shield. This is okay for a while but I became a little bored with it after the first few times.

As the rounds progress the fighting becomes progressively harder. Players get coloured belts awarded at around level 25.

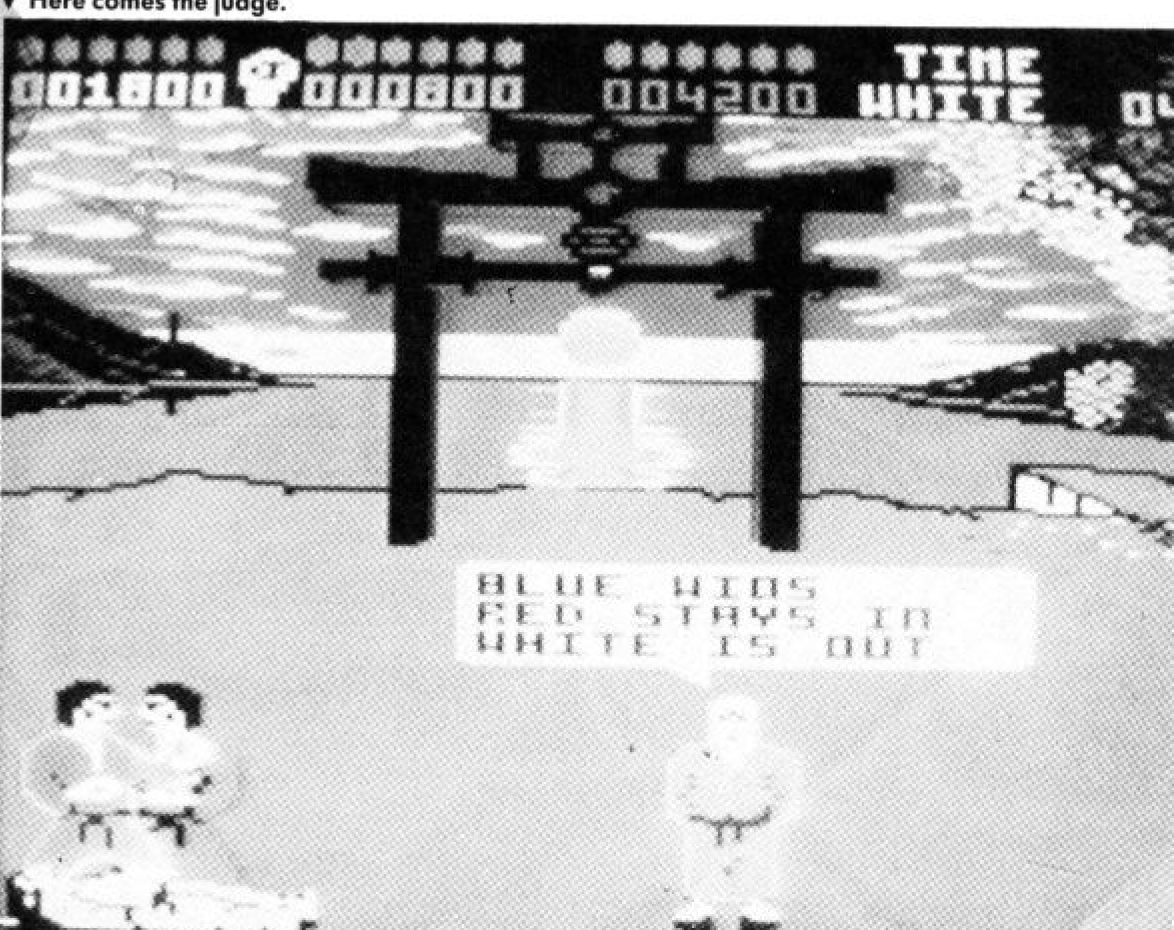
A nice touch is that the computer-controlled fighters do not perform the same strategy each time. They may, for example, fight each other and

The background graphics and the animation of the fighters are really neat. The sound is okay, too.

So if you fancy beating up your Amstrad, then *International Karate Plus* is just the game to do it.

► GRAPHICS	8
► SOUND	7
► VALUE	8
► PLAYABILITY	8

▼ Here comes the judge.





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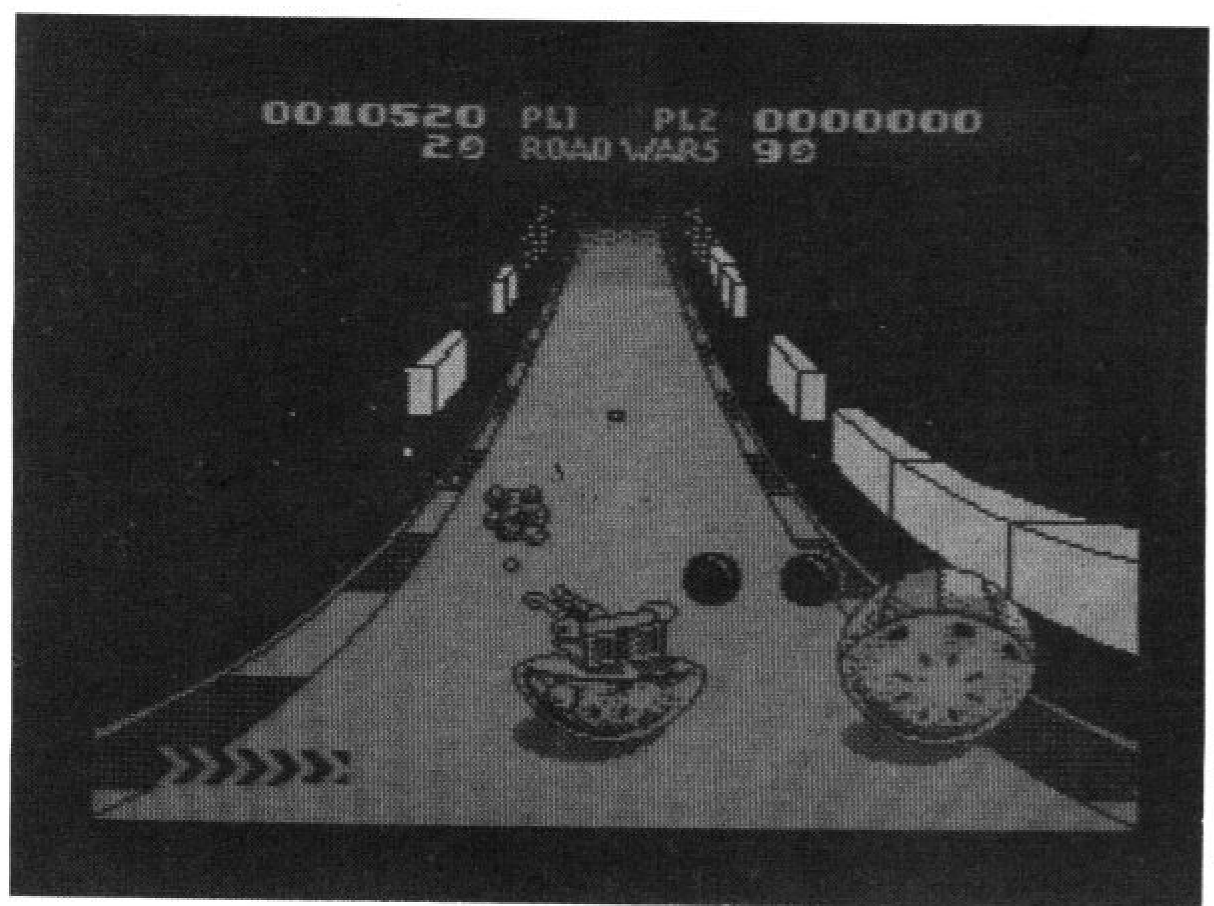
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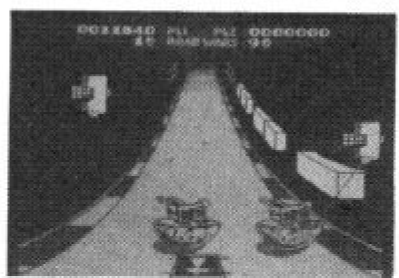
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ROADWARS

- MACHINES: ST, AMIGA, SPECTRUM, CBM 64.
- SUPPLIER: MELBOURNE HOUSE
- PRICE: £19.99 ST AND AMIGA, SPECTRUM AND CBM 64 £9.99
- VERSION TESTED: SPECTRUM
- REVIEWER: EUGENE LACEY

How do you get into the lucrative arcade licence market without coughing up the obligatory telephone numbers of readies?

Easy: just start up your own arcade arm and convert the games yourself.

With such logic has Mastertronic entered the fray. Despite the modest smoke screen of putting the game out on their Melbourne House label, *Roadwars* is just such a product. How well it has done in the arcades has yet to be assessed, but it certainly looked mighty impressive on the Amiga. It has many of the right ingredients mentioning "road" in the title (thus cashing in on the driving game craze) and having a two player option for those gregarious arcade types.

The player controls a Battlesphere moving down a roadway (the Battlesphere actually stays still and the road scrolls towards you, but it all amounts to the same thing). The sphere moves from side to side and the gun turret on top rotates.

To get to the next level, all the shaded blocks moving past the side of the road must be blown away but naturally the road is strewn with hazards. These include balls, spikes, laser barriers and hovering satellites.

The balls give the Battlesphere greater firepower if hit but things get really tough, the Battlesphere has the handy ability to do hedgehog impersonations and roll up into a ball. This protects it against most hazards.

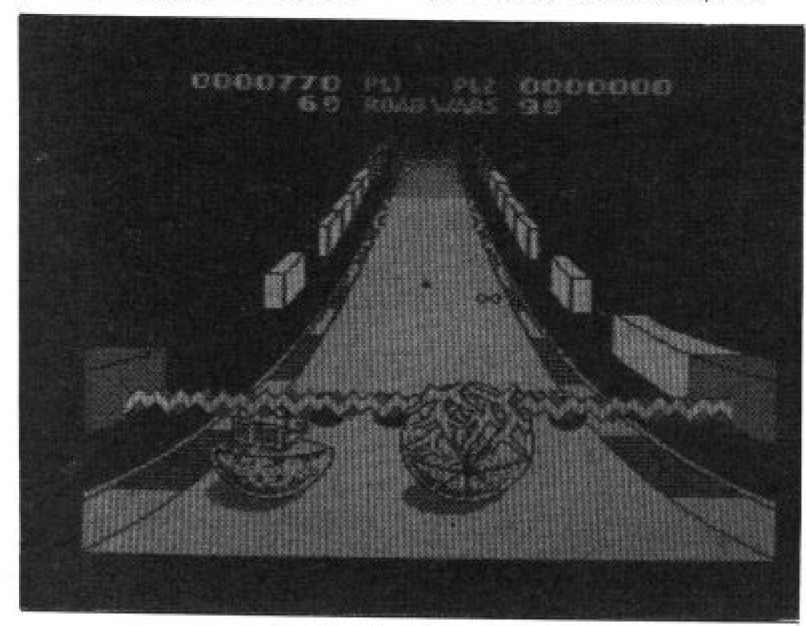
One major problem can be the other Battlesphere that hangs around. If this is controlled by the computer, it plays a fairly passive role, but obviously if in the hands of another player, it can either be a help, knocking out threatening balls, or a real pain in the posterior, barging you off the road.

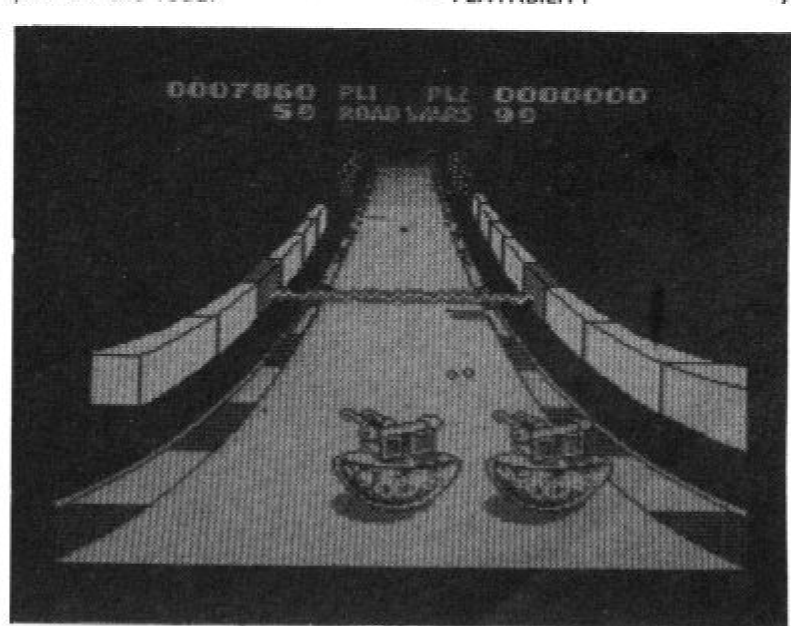
Converting this game onto the spectrum has meant that a lot of the frills have gone. The multicolour graphics have become monochrome and the odd beep is no substitute for digitised sound.

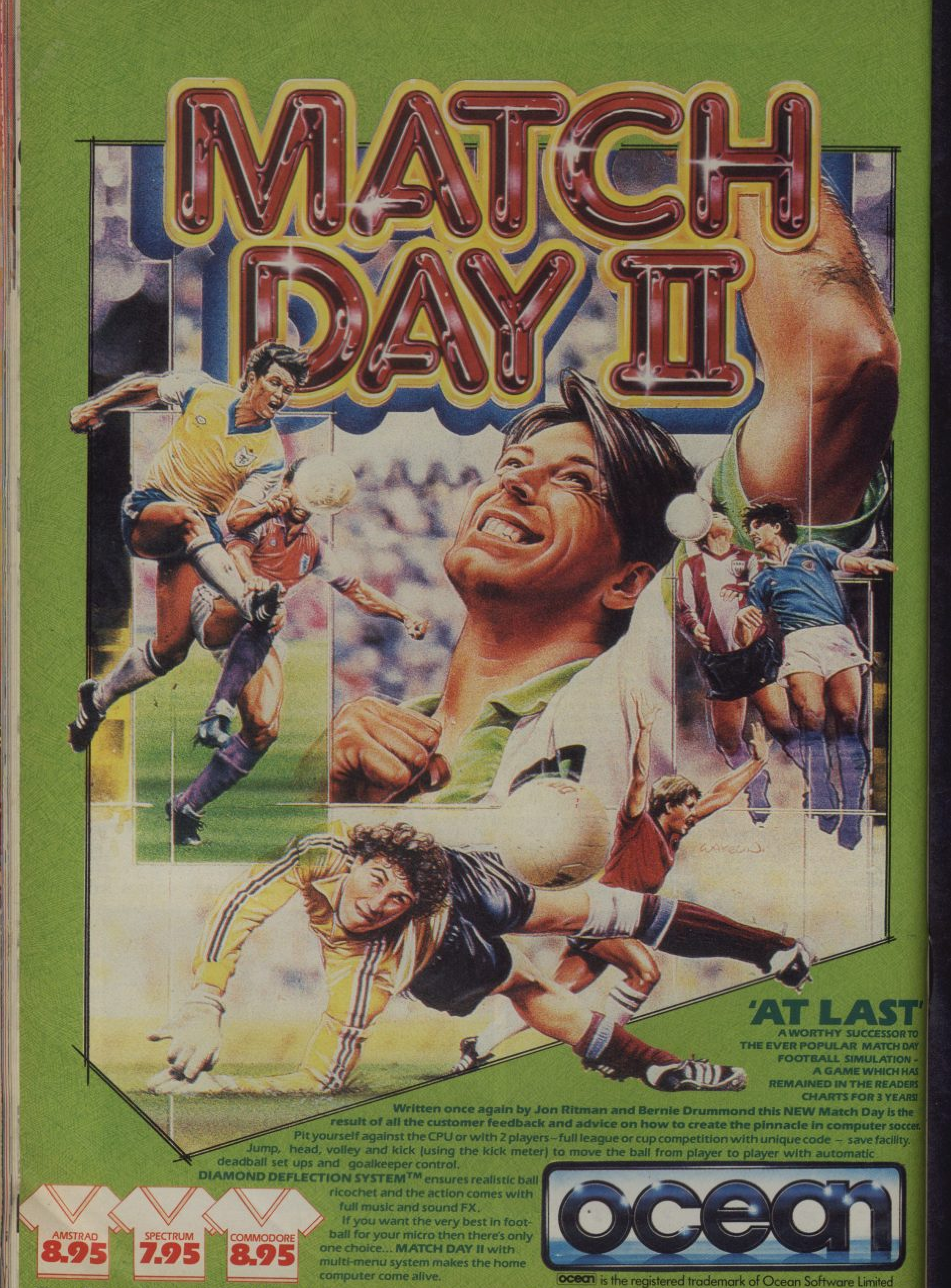
Unfortunately, as so often happens, stripped of its gloss the game turns out to be nothing special at all. Once you've got the hang of the first few hazards, you have to go through half a dozen levels before anything new comes along.

The graphics are well drawn and smoothly animated and the whole package is very slick, but in the overcrowded market of shoot-em-ups this is not one that stands out.

► GRAPHICS	8
► SOUND	6
► VALUE	6
► PLAYABILITY	7







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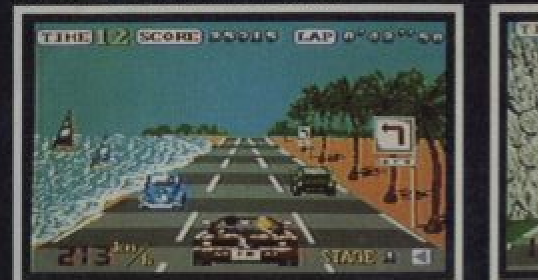
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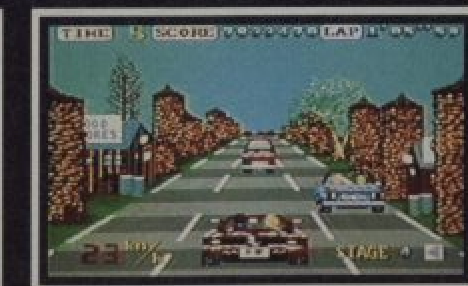
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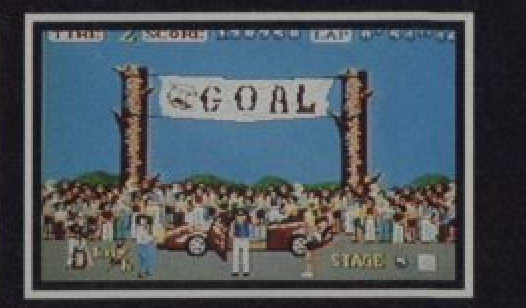
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KRYPTON FAC

► MACHINES: SPECTRUM/AMSTRAD/CBM 64
► SUPPLIER: TV GAMES
► PRICE: £7.95
► VERSION TESTED: AMSTRAD
► REVIEWER: PAUL BOUGHTON

With *Blockbusters*, TV Games came up with a brilliant little game. It was fun, addictive, made you laugh and really captured the spirit of the television programme it was based on.

The *Krypton Factor* is, however, a far less successful attempt to bring the quiz and task show to the computer screen. And that's not really the fault of the programmers but the rather restrictive format of the TV show itself. It doesn't really lend itself to the home micro and the resulting game I found very slow to play. Almost tediously slow.

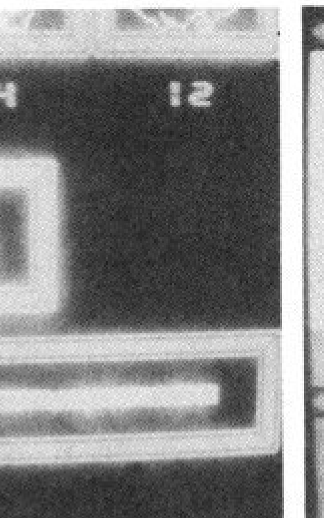
The game's individual parts are all taken from the show and each has to be loaded separately which again means there's a lot of sitting around doing nothing. All are played against the clock.

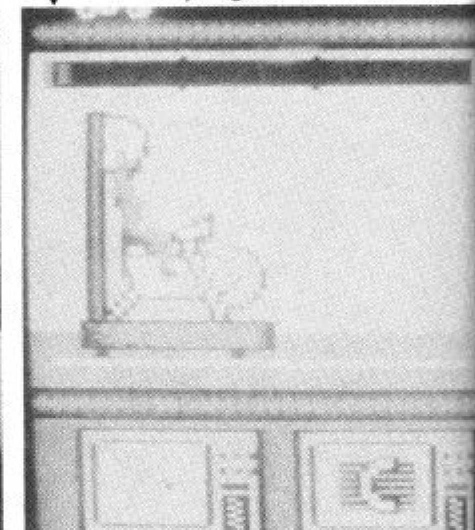
Up to four people play, each selecting the character they want to be from the eight supplied, although you can change character details if you want.

The first section is mental agility. Here a series of numbers is flashed onto the screen. Each player must arrange the numbers in their head in correct ascending numerical order and re-enter them into the computer. This is real brain-buster only for memory men and women.

Next is the observation round. A story and related picture are shown. The story scrolls along the bottom of the screen. This is shown twice only certain changes are made to the picture and story which you have to spot. This section was so boring that I nearly nodded off several times.

The response round promised



▼ *General knowledge — the best section.*


▼ *Move the cycling machine.*

JETBIKE SI

► MACHINES: SPECTRUM/AMSTRAD
► SUPPLIER: CODE MASTERS
► PRICE: £4.99
► VERSIONS TESTED: SPECTRUM/AMSTRAD
► REVIEWER: PAUL BOUGHTON

This latest Code Masters' simulation package promises so much. But, for me, the promise, is not delivered.

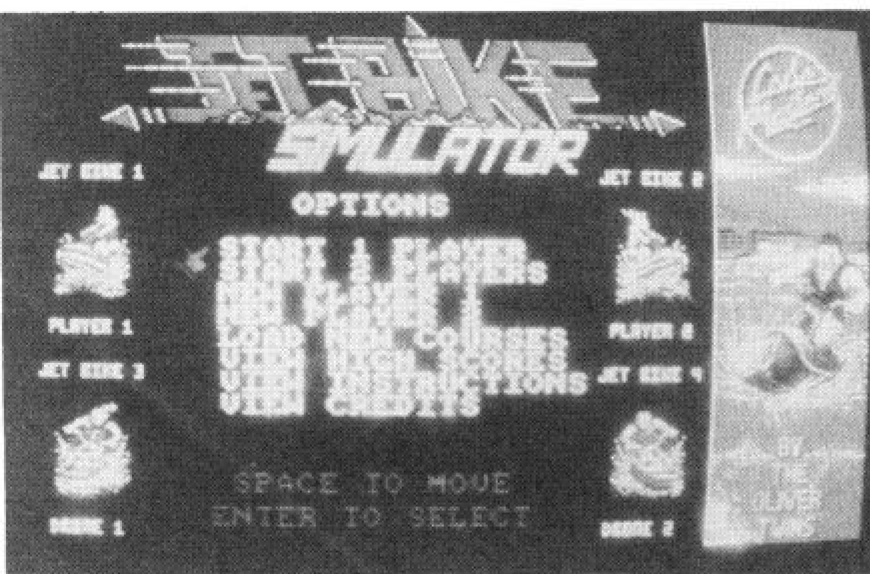
For the very reasonable sum of £4.99 you get two cassettes containing the standard game, the expert game, extra courses based on coastlines and extra courses based on docks, making 24 circuits in all. Not only that. There's also a colour poster and a Code Masters sticker.

All this is flawed by the fact that the game is not good. In fact, it's boring.

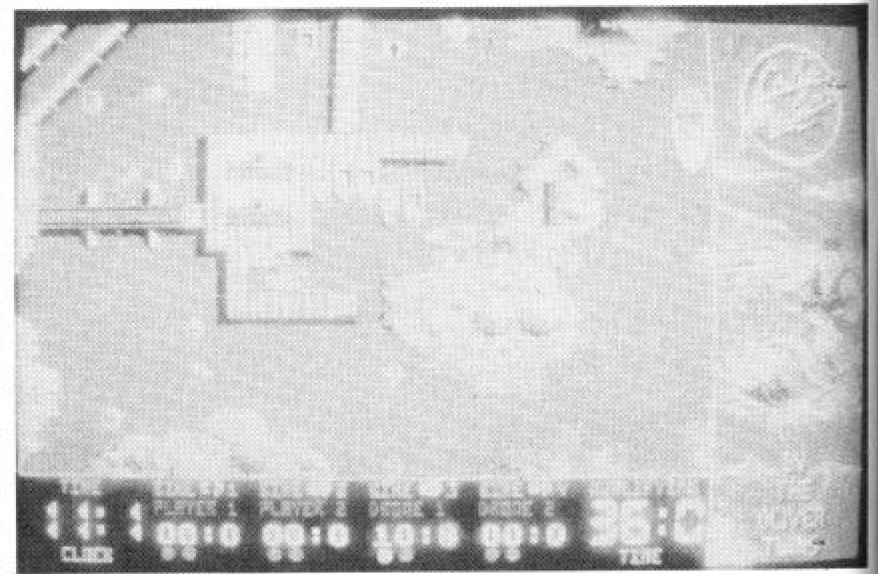
The courses are viewed from above. There are four jetbikes in each race and up to two people can play. You race against the clock, completing two circuits in the time, and must steer between the numbered buoys in the correct sequence. If you qualify you go onto the next course. In all there are five courses to be beaten in each championship.

Both the Spectrum and Amstrad versions make an attempt at speech. I had to listen to the Spectrum version several times before I could make out what it was. The Amstrad speech is a little better.

The jetbikes themselves appear as little more than small arrow shaped creations with a stream of what seems like



▲ *Decisions — to play or not to play.*



▲ *The standard course.*

ACTOR



some action at last, or that's what I hoped. Some hope! What you have to do is move a cycling machine from one side of the screen to the other. The keys you hit must be hit at different rates. The second part of this section tests colour sense. At this stage the colour temporarily gave up on my TV so I decided to skip this section. I didn't think my life would be a lot poorer without it.

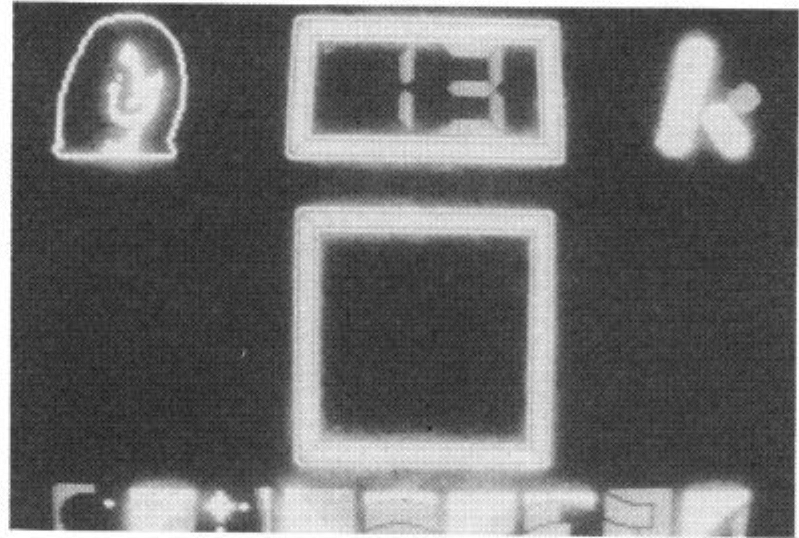
The physical ability section is the *Krypton Factor* assault course. You are presented with a view of the course from above and the characters are controlled with four keys, each representing strength, stamina, arm power and leg power. You must tap the appropriate key at the right moment. The action I hoped for to liven up the game turned out to be pretty tame stuff.

The intelligence section sees you trying to re-assemble a puzzle, and the general knowledge part is fairly obvious. In fact, this last section was the most enjoyable bit for me. It's a pity I had to plough through the other bits to get to it.

I can't fault the *Krypton Factor* and say it's not a faithful representation of the TV programme because it is. And that's where the trouble lies. The programme isn't really a suitable subject for a computer game. It's too much of a mish-mash of tests, skills, intelligence and strength to form a comprehensive game.

For faithful TV fans only. By the way, marks for graphics and sound are almost meaningless and are not the essential part of the game.

▼ *Bits and pieces — the puzzle section.*



► GRAPHICS	4
► SOUND	4
► VALUE	6
► PLAYABILITY	4

SIMULATOR

bubbles coming from the back.

So it's down to an actual race. On the Spectrum version I first elected to use the keyboard. "Get ready," croaked the Speccie. I got ready. Tension didn't mount. Then we were off.

The computer-controlled bikes rocketed away. Well, perhaps not quite, but they moved a lot faster than me. I shot off in an erratic manner, bouncing off islands, moored boats, disappearing under walk ways, missing the buoys and eventually being run over by my fellow competitors. All that and I still didn't sink.

A few more attempts failed to see any significant improvement in my race technique or desire to continue playing the game.

However, I switched to joystick control in the hope of gaining some control over the bike. Things became a little better but I still appeared to be out of control most of the time. In a last ditch attempt, I switched to the Amstrad with the same lack of effect.

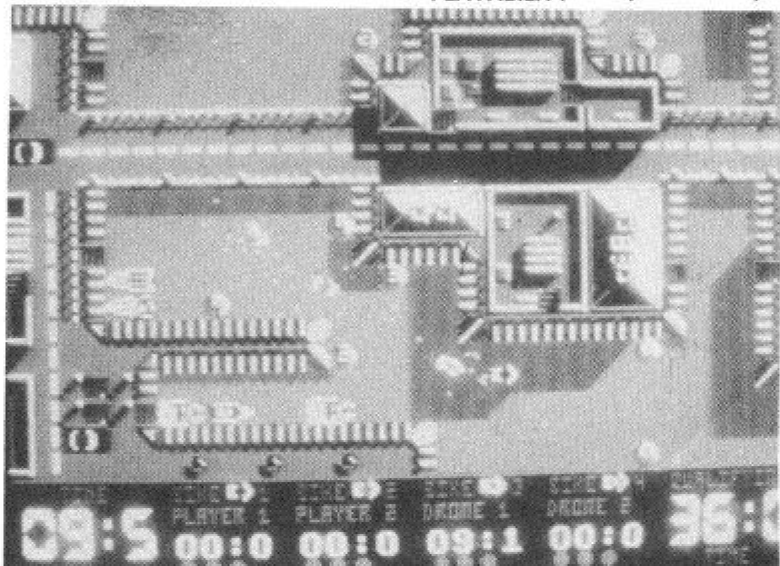
The sound effects on the Amstrad was a series of bings and bongs, the significance of which I couldn't quite make out. On the Spectrum it was clicks.

I'm sure jetbike racing is probably one of the most exciting water sports, *Jetbike Simulator* is not one of the most exciting of computer games.

	SPECTRUM	AMSTRAD
► GRAPHICS	7	7
► SOUND	6	6
► VALUE	6	6
► PLAYABILITY	4	4



▲ *Coastal collisions.*



▲ *Dock shock — I lost.*


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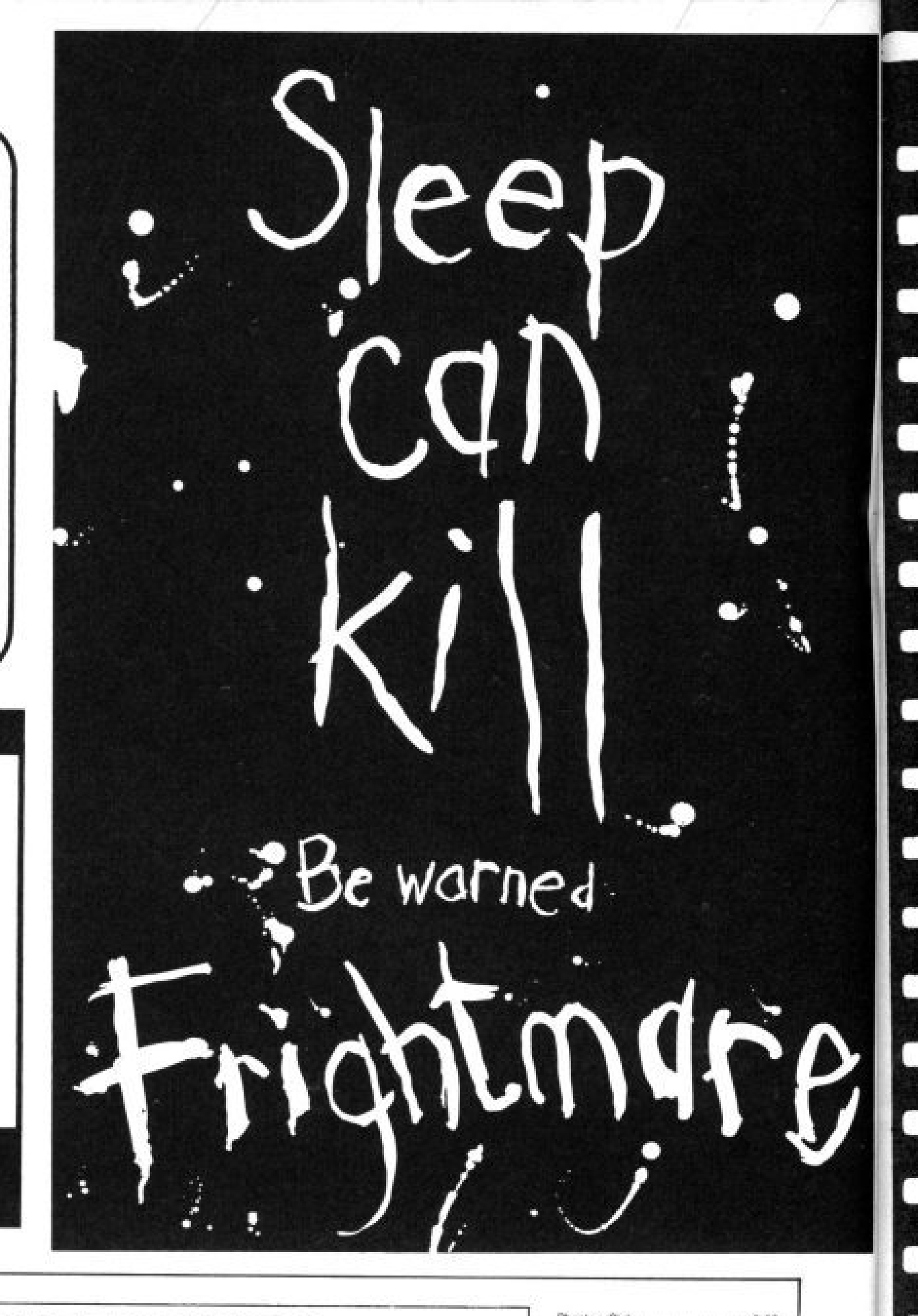
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The Big Screen

Drink, drugs, decadence . . . who'd review films for *C+VG?* Ward R Street would, as he finds that February's the month for filth and thrills.

▼ Stakeout: Spot the red herring.

It's a good thing that this is a leap year because February's so packed with quality pictures, you'll need that extra day to take them all in! There's a couple of comedy thrillers plus enough sex, drugs and sleaze to keep Mary Whitehouse in hysterics. So whichever wild side you prefer, prepare to take a walk.

Contrary to its exciting image, ninety percent of police work is dull routine. There's the paperwork, mundane detection and worst of all, the protracted boredom of a **Stakeout (15).** Perhaps it's hardly surprising that Seattle detectives Chris Lecce, Bill Reimers and their colleagues all act a bit crazy.

This particular stakeout seems particularly pointless as the escaped convict isn't really expected to show up at his ex-girlfriend Maria's house and if he does, Chris and Bill aren't supposed to arrest him because the FBI want to the glamour of recapturing him for themselves.

Still, the job does have its perks, like the constant practical jokes that the cops play on each other. And then there's Maria. Like a couple of Peeping Toms, Chris and Bill spy on every activity of her life – and they're authorised to do it.

They're not authorised to get more closely involved though, but when Chris crosses the street to place a bug in her phone, his interest becomes decidedly un-professional. He falls in love! After that it's a question of how he can carry on his romance without letting her know that he's a cop or his fellow cops knowing that he's keeping her under *extremely* close surveillance.

With Richard Dreyfuss as Chris and Emilio Estevez as Bill, there are plenty of laughs as the situation gets ever more complex, but when jail-breaking boyfriend Stick finally makes a surprise arrival in Seattle, it doesn't short-change you on the action. Stake this one out at your local cinema soon!

The only thing more boring than a stakeout is babysitting. Right! Wrong! **A Night on the Town (PG)** is a night to remember. Christine is the unfortunate seventeen year-old stuck with young Brad and his kid sister Sara when her boyfriend unexpectedly cancels a date.

She expects a quiet evening in front of the TV but what she gets is a journey into dark, dangerous, downtown Chicago which brings her and the kids into contact with menacing mobsters, a one-handed pick-up driver and even the Mighty Thor! tagging along for the ride is Brad's buddy Daryl, a precocious brat who seems to think that he's God's gift to women before he even starts shaving!

Meanwhile the reason for this deadly quest, Chris's friend Brenda, is stuck in the bus station, surrounded by winos and weirdos who won't let her use the phone because they claim it's their home. Move over the yuppie nightmare movie – this is a teenage terror pic as every crazy situation only gets crazier.

▼ Night on the Town:



Like a kitten with a ball of string, *A Night on the Town* just tangles its threads until it looks like Chris will never unravel the plot. But it's every good baby-sitter's duty to get their charges back before their parents arrive home. Cancel all baby-sitting appointments to find out if she succeeds.

Now for a little test. A young woman, stranded in a mansion in the middle of nowhere, with a couple of middle aged men who seem to be several snowflakes short of a blizzard, prepares for bed. She carefully locks the door, but on the wall opposite is a full-length mirror. What happens next? if you've ever watched one of those old dark house moves on television, you'll know exactly what to expect, **Dead of Winter (18)** is the same story, sort of brought up to date. The house creaks and things go bump in the night while the wind howls through the holes in the plot.

You know that you're in for an artificial couple of hours when Mary Steenburgen plays three roles. Thankfully she only has to concentrate on one for most of the time. As Katie McGovern she's chosen to take over a part in a movie because she's a look-alike for its missing star. Meanwhile the film producer's assistant, Roddy McDowall, is a look alike for Antony Perkins in *Psycho!*

Even this isn't enough to make her turn back though, so she arrives at the snow-bound house only to find that there's no evidence of a film being made – but there's every sign that the author of Dead of Winter has seen far too many melodramatic old movies. Still, it's too late to escape and it only remains to see if she survives and what her third role is.



▲ Dead of winter: Frozen action

As directed by Arthur Penn, who made *Bonnie and*

The Big Screen

Clyde, the film undoubtedly looks good and has a certain flair, but unless you're really attracted to the sort of plot which comes on like a trainee Sleuth, then you're likely to groan as loudly as the house.

Now it's on with the rubber gloves as we sample some sleaze, Stateside-style. **Barfly (18)** begins with two guys hammering the hell out of each other in a back-alley, and it took me a minute to realise that one of them is Mickey Rourke. His lip is split, his jaw juts like a cro-magnon man and his beard is to designer stubble what Woolworth is to high fashion.

▼ **Bar fly: Faye swots Mickey.**



Rourke is Henry Chinaski, all-out alcoholic and errand boy in a Los Angeles bar, inhabited by freaks, misfits and the odd extra from a zombie movie . . . at least they look brain dead! But Henry, when he's sobre enough, is also a writer and Tully, the upper-class editor of a literary magazine wants more than just his poetry!

Henry's involved with Wanda Wilcox though. Despite her faded beauty she's as crazy as the rest of them, particulalry when she's got a bottle between her lips – which is most of the time. She and Henry are a pair made in alcoholic heaven, and anyone who tries to come between them has to go through hell.

Sound depressing? Well, it's not. Forget *Cheers* – this is bar-life with real beers and black humour chasers. Author Charles Bukowski knows that pain and good humour sit side by side on skid-row, and he drains every last drop of laughter from the bottle labelled 'despair'. Brilliant performances too from Rourke, who can do no wrong, and Faye Dunaway as Wanda.

Not that the British are far behind when it comes to squalor. **Withnail and I (15)** seem to have spent the sixties so far out of their skulls on drink and drugs that they've not done the washing up for the whole decade.

Even *The Young Ones* would have felt moved to tidy this tip.

It was twenty years ago today (or thereabouts) that writer/director Bruce Robinson was living in Camden Town with another struggling actor, while a rag-bag assortment of freaky friends passed through their flat. His memoir of that era is quite simply hysterical.

When the horrors of London – and that pile of greasy dishes – finally get too much, Withnail and the otherwise anonymous 'I' borrow a cottage in the West country from Withnail's flamboyantly gay uncle.

Too late they find that the natives are far from friendly but that the predatory uncle, who arrives unexpectedly in the middle of the night, is – particularly towards 'I'!

The performances of the sweetly innocent Paul McGann and manic Richard E Grant, who can even find consolation in a bottle of lighter fluid, are brilliant. Like **Barfly,** it's not an all-out action film, but it is hysterically funny. Funny enough to become my film of the month, in fact.

But decadence and drugs know no class barriers, and even **Withnail** would be hard put to match the aristocracy at play in Africa during the 1940s. Who cares if there's a war – in Kenya's Happy Valley the toffs are up to **White Mischief (18).**

Based on a true story, this is the story of Josslyn Hay, the 22nd Earl of Erroll, for whom every night was party night and every young woman fair fame. That includes Diana, the attractive young wife of Sir 'Jock' Delives Broughton, a man whose face seems to have been pressed out of raw pastry.

Eventually the attractions of his bulging wallet are outweighed by the unattractiveness of his bulging belly and she runs off with Erroll. But these being British citizens, lips remain stiff at all times – until Erroll's is permanently chilled by a bullet in the brain.

▼ **White Mischief: Naughty but . .**

The real fun in **White Mischief** is watching middle-aged aristos acting worse than a Club 18-30 mob. It sets the scene nicely for the trial of Broughton and keeps you guessing – did he do it? I'm not telling. You'll have to see it for yourself and you can rest assured, there are no **Out of Africa** pretty pictures of flamingos to bore you in this one!

Drugs scar the surface of contemporary Dublin's fair city too, where **The Courier (15)** is likely to be carrying a packet of crack to the local dealer, who is using ordinary motorcycle messengers to run his deadly dope around town.

Messenger Mark is drawn into the plot when his best-friend Danny dies after taking poisoned smack. With Danny's sister, Colette, well-played by ex-Pogue Cait O'Riordan, he sets out to take his revenge on gang boss Val, superbly portrayed by one of Ireland's finest actors, Gabriel Byrne.

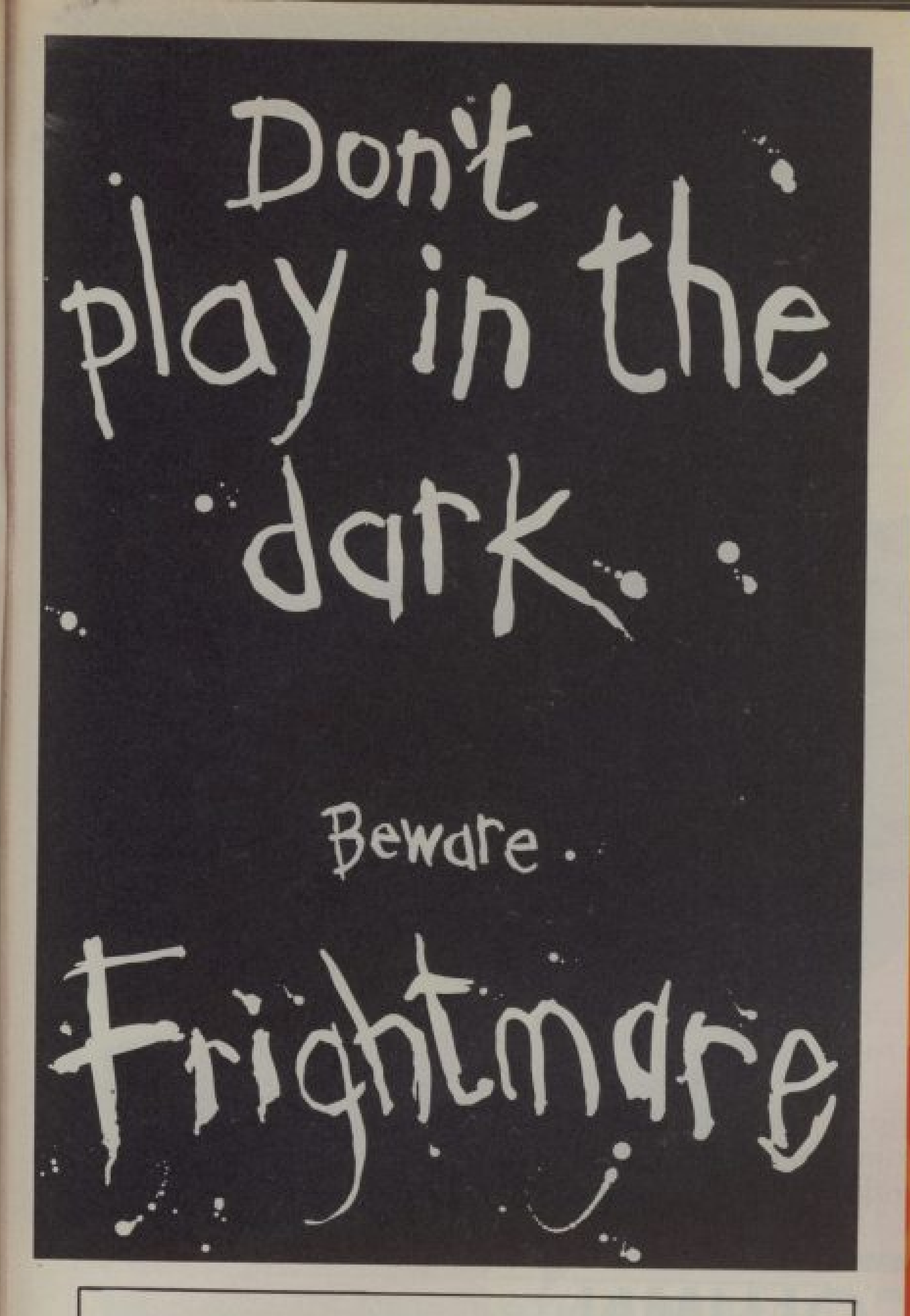
This is a first film from a tiny Irish independent company, made on a miniscule budget. It manages to avoid all the obvious cliches, and if a few aspects of the plot are less than satisfactory, it still has a freshness and a sense of being close to the street-level missing from most Hollywood epics.

An example of movie-making-by-numbers is **Teen Wolf Too (PG),** a sort of sequel to the surprise hit of last year. I say sort of because Michael J. Fox has moved on to better things, to be replaced by a looks-vaguely-similar, Jason Bateman, in the film teen Wolf's cousin and in real life the producer's son!

Apart from that it's virtually a re-run of the original, with boxing replacing basketball, and the addition of the ever-wonderful John Astin (Gomez from The Addams Family) as the ambitious college head.

The make up and effects are atrocious and when the script runs out of ideas the director throws in a totally unnecessary, and badly executed musical number, that looks as if he's auditioning to direct promos in future.

And finally, remember **Bellman and True.** I've raved about this superb British thriller twice now – and each time it's had its release put back. Well, now it's scheduled for April, so let's hope it doesn't disappear in mysterious circumstances again!



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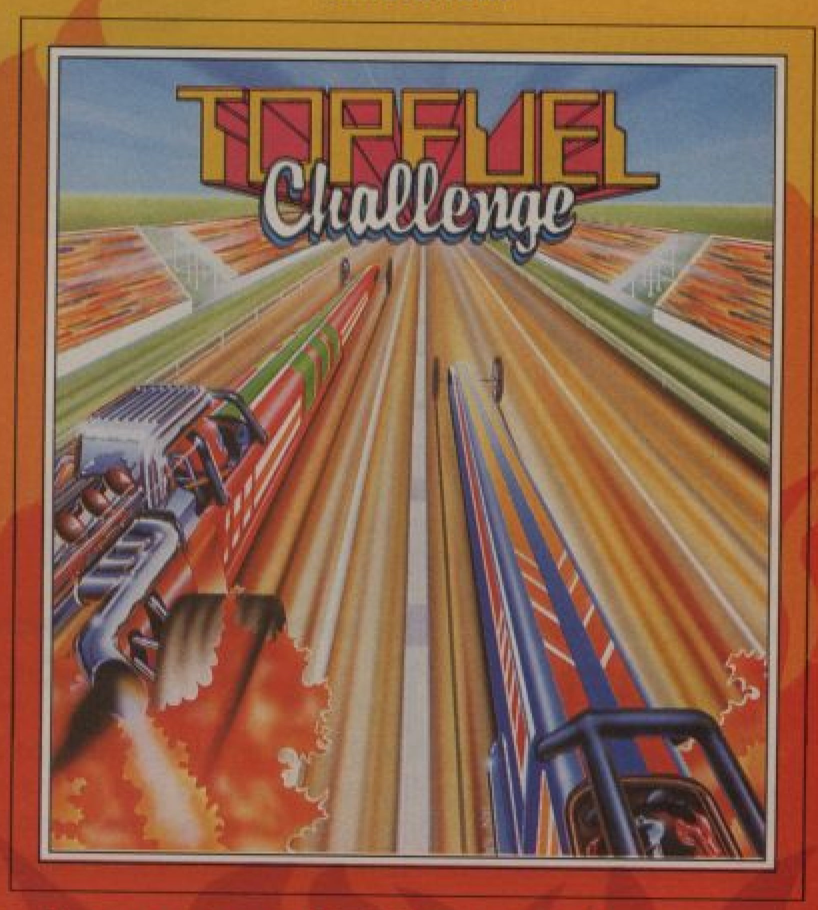
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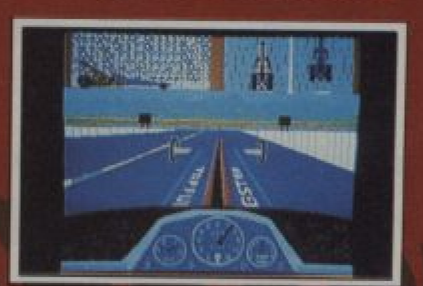
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Ten of the best entrants will then be invited down for a fun day out at Priory Court where we will establish just who is numero uno. The winner then stays on – to face a challenger every month until beaten.

The monthly challenges will be fought out on a range of new releases and the winner will receive a copy of each game for his /her system plus a bag of C+VG goodies – T Shirt, binders and badges.

NEW HINTS AND TIPS COLUMN

We have taken a long hard look at hints and tips in C+VG and have decided to give it a real boost. If you thought it just came down to maps and pokes then you would be wrong – check us out next month for a few surprises.

ATARI ST AND AMIGO

We have just extended our computer room to make space for an extra ST and Amiga. We need two of each to bash out reviews of all the 16 bit games that are arriving at the moment. Check next month's C+VG for the most complete guide to the 16 bit games scene.

BETTER REVIEWS

We've got a brand new team and they are raring to go. Get us next month for some fresh opinions.

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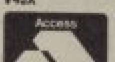
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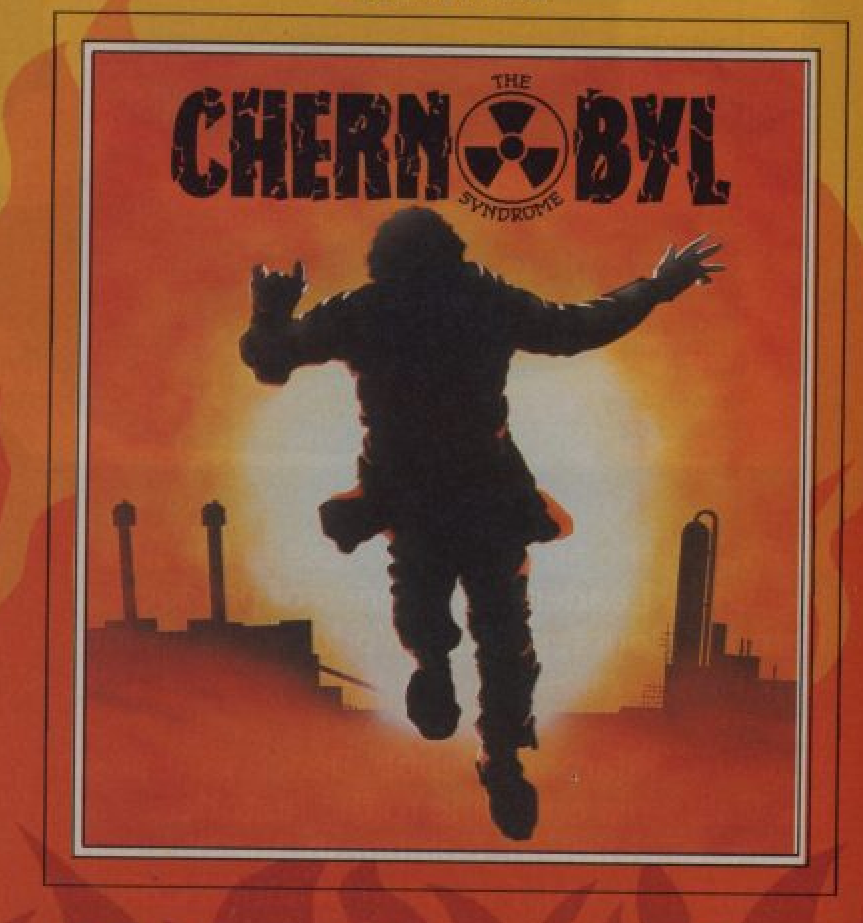


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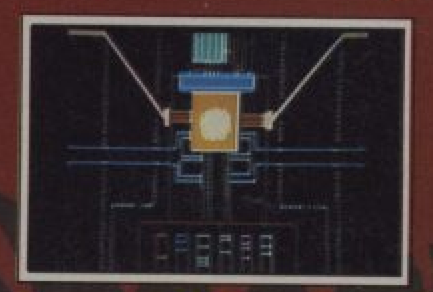
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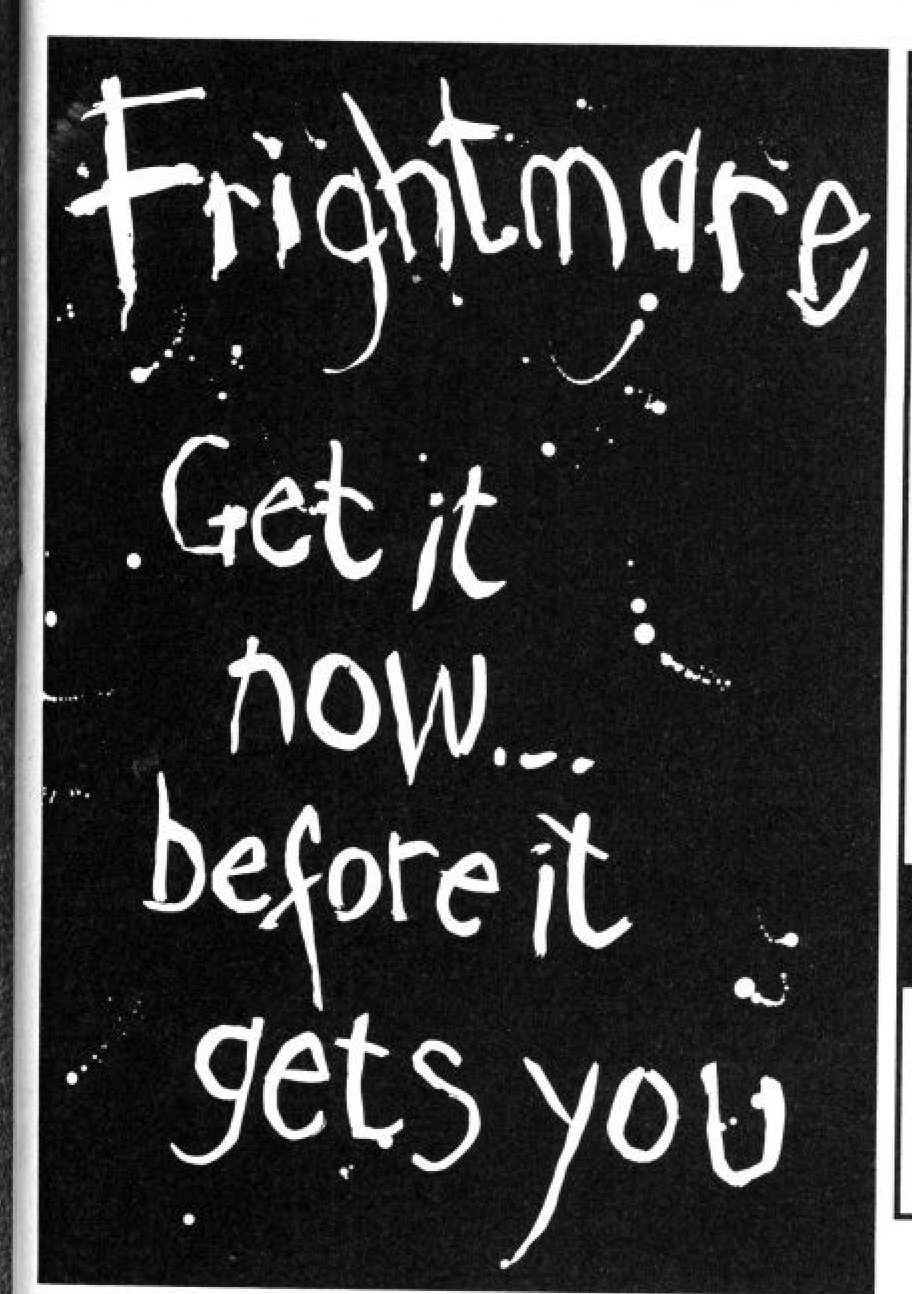
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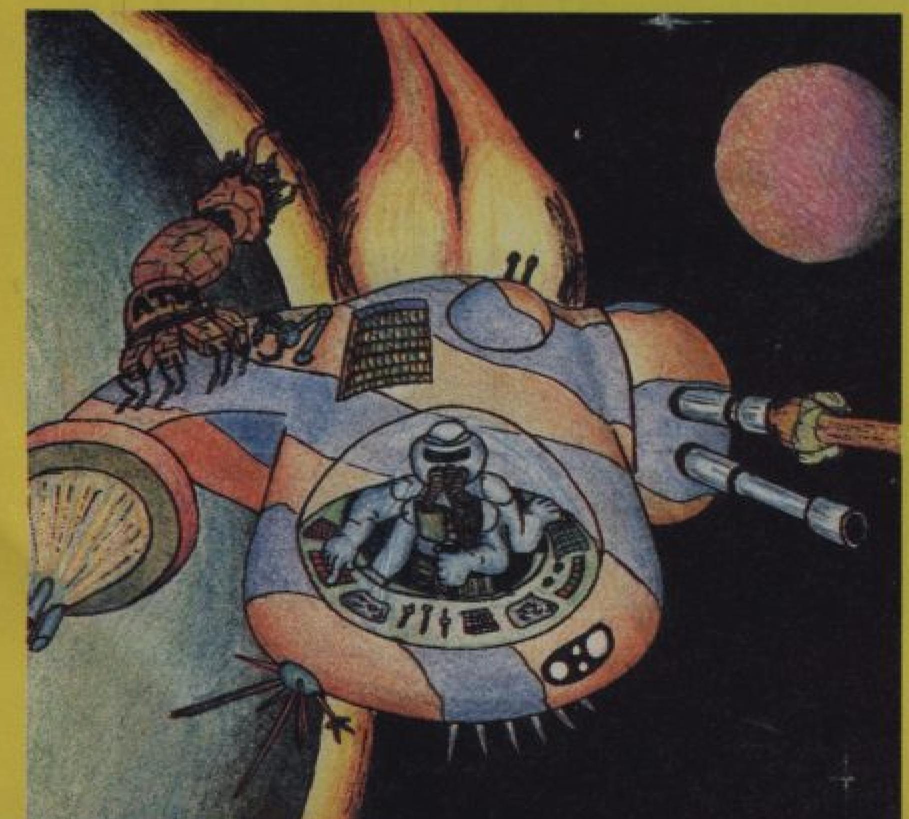
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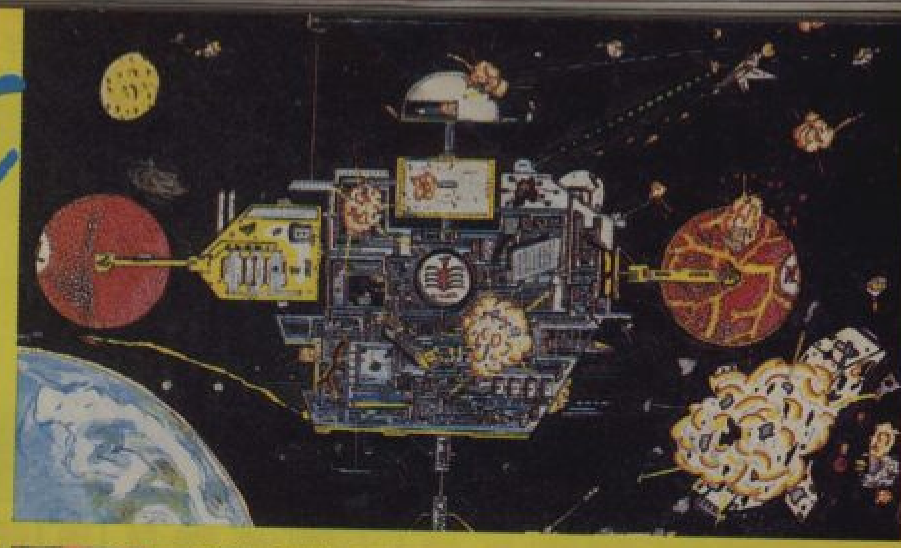
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AN
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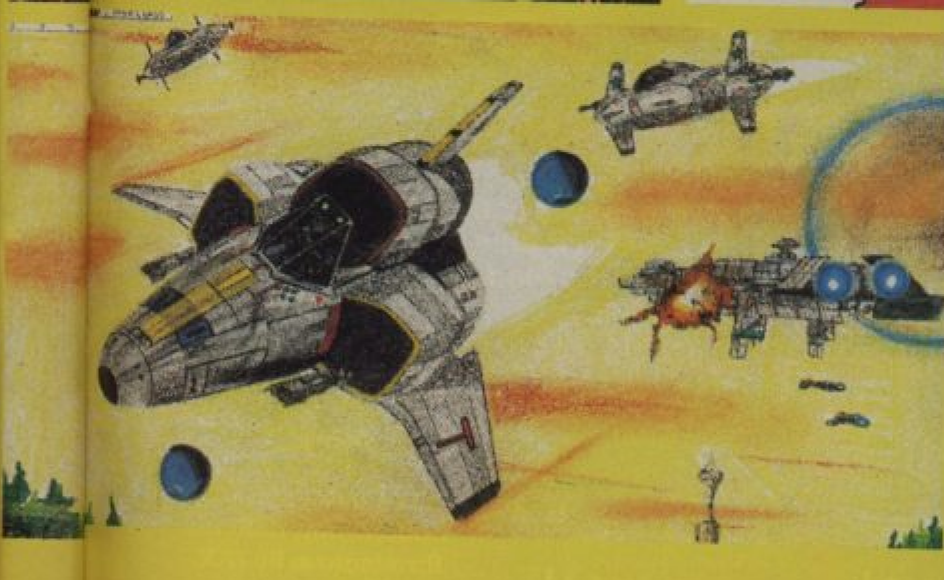














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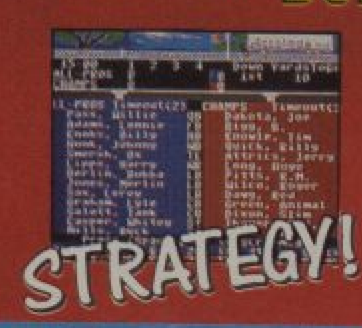


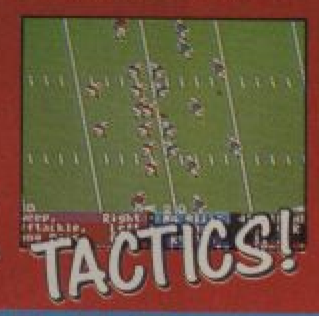
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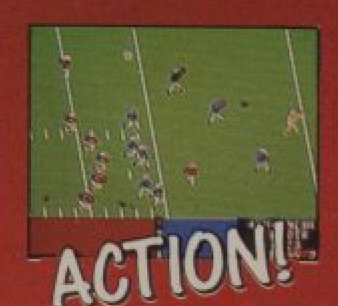
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BLAH BLAH VOLKSWAGEN BLAH BLAH... MUMBLE... FILOFAX... BLAH BLAH FORTNUM & MASON... BLAH.. GLOB.. BLEAHhh..
BAD CRAZYNESS! THIS WOMAN IS TOTALLY INCOHERENT. MUST HAVE BEEN SOME PARTY. AND CHECK OUT THE CAR. .. BEST I DISAPPEAR, THE COPS WILL ARRIVE ANY TIME NOW.
THE FIENDS FALL, THEY HIT THE CAR AND THEN THEY RUN AWAY?
I MUST FIND THEM, QUESTION THEM IF THEY'RE RATIONAL. THEY CAN'T STAY HIDDEN FOR LONG. TOO WILD. I HAVE BUT TO WAIT...
GAS. IT WAS GAS THAT CAUSED IT...
SCHRANK PANTHER...
SIGHTED GRAFFITI ON THE NORTH WALL. IT WAS HIM...
NAH. NOT HIS STYLE. NON VIOLENT CRIMINAL...
OWNER OF FLAT WAS A GEOFFREY BLOOMFIELD, 34, STOCKBROKER. NOW DEAD AS A DOORNAIL. OUR ONLY SUSPECT TO DATE IS THE SCHRANK PANTHER. SO FAR WE HAVE A WRECKED CAR, TWO SUSPICIOUS OBJECTS AND ONE WITNESS WHO'S SO BARKING MAD SHE'LL SOON BE HOWLING AT THE MOON... WHAT THE HELL HAPPENED HERE?
WEIRD...
FISHY AS HELL...
GAS...
POOR BLOKE WAS INCINERATED... FITS IN A SHOE BOX.
DAMNED CAT BURGLAR...
POLICE
ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE PROFESSOR AUBRY MONCRIEF. FORENSICS.
YES! YES! YES! FASCINATING. AS YET THE GIRL WE FOUND IS OF NO USE WHATSOEVER - JUST ROLLS HERE EYE-BALLS AND TALKS GIBBERISH. MMM... SHE REMINDS ME OF MY THIRD WIFE... MORE INTERESTING ARE TWO OBJECTS FOUND IN THE APARTMENT. TOTALLY UNSCATHED BY AN EXPLOSION AND RAGING FIRE!
A BOOK AND A SKULL!...
THE BOOK IS VERY ANCIENT. IT'S WRITTEN IN LATIN. THE CONTENTS CONCERN DEMONOLOGY AND IT IS ENTITLED 'THE BOOK OF MANIFESTATIONS.' THE SKULL! AH-THE SKULL. NOW THERE'S A THING. I STUDIED ZOOLOGY AT UNIVERSITY. NEVER CAME ACROSS SUCH A SPECIES AND THAT JEWEL... IT'S ALL QUITE REMARKABLE...
SO OUR STOCKBROKER FRIEND WAS A DEMON LOVER AND HAD A WEIRD PET. IT STILL DOESN'T EXPLAIN THIS MESS.



SPEAKING OF MESS, WHAT'S THAT STUFF ON YOUR HANDS?
OH THAT? UM... THE CAR WAS COVERED IN IT.
SO ARE YOU. WHAT IS IT?
SNOT.
OKAY, THAT'S IT. I'ME GOING HOME. CLEAR THIS MESS UP, GET THE CAR TOWED AWAY, POST A GUARD. NO ONE GOES NEAR PENTHOUSE APARTMENT 99A. I WANT THIS AREA SAFE. GET THE ANTIQUE FREAK SHOW SENT TO THE LABS. I WANT THEM ANALYSED, SEND SOME OF YOUR MUCUS TOO. GOODNIGHT GENTLEMEN.
POLICE
POLICE
99A
99
PENALTY FOR IMPROPER USE...
NO SMOKING
GO ON, PULL IT. GO ON.
BUT THE BIG CLAKKETY SNAKE WE'RE IN MIGHT GET ANGRY.. HMMM...
PLEASE DON'T WRITE ON
50
SCRATCH
TUBS
"KILL THE BODY AND THE HEAD WILL DIE!"
HOWITZER! THE BEER FOR MEN
PFF! I'LL PULL IT ANYWAY!
YES GO ON PULL IT ANYWAY.
NO SMOKING
OMYGOD DON'T P...
TACKHEAD BLEAH!!



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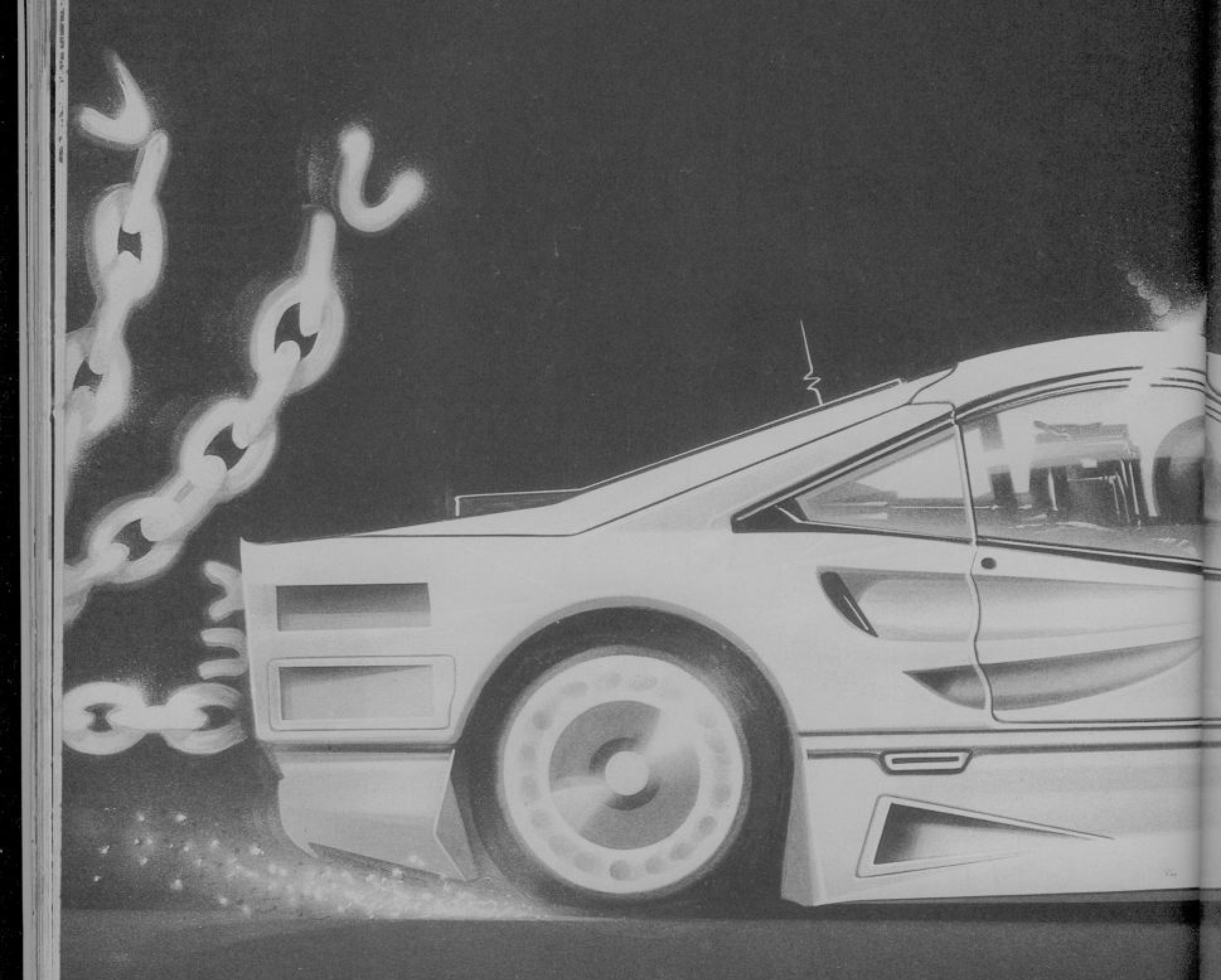

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B12
THEY SENT SOMEONE THROUGH! ANOTHER DEMON IZ AFTER US!


I FELT HIM ARRIVE. HE'Z BIG. ENORMOUS IN FACT. DO US IN FOR SURE IF HE KETCHEZ US...


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STOP


BUT YOU SHOT THE GAS OVEN YOU PINHEAD! IT WAZ CEMENTED TO THE WALL! WITHOUT THE JEWEL WE CAN'T TELEPORT! IF THE GRIMNASTEE KETCHEZ US WE'RE DOOMED! THAT HEAD COULD BE ANYWHERE, BUT THE SEARCH STARTS NOW.
MY EXCITEMENT WAZ GREAT. I WAZ CARRIED BY THE MOMENT. I SHOT ANYTHING THAT MOVED. I AM NOT ASHAMED.
GO

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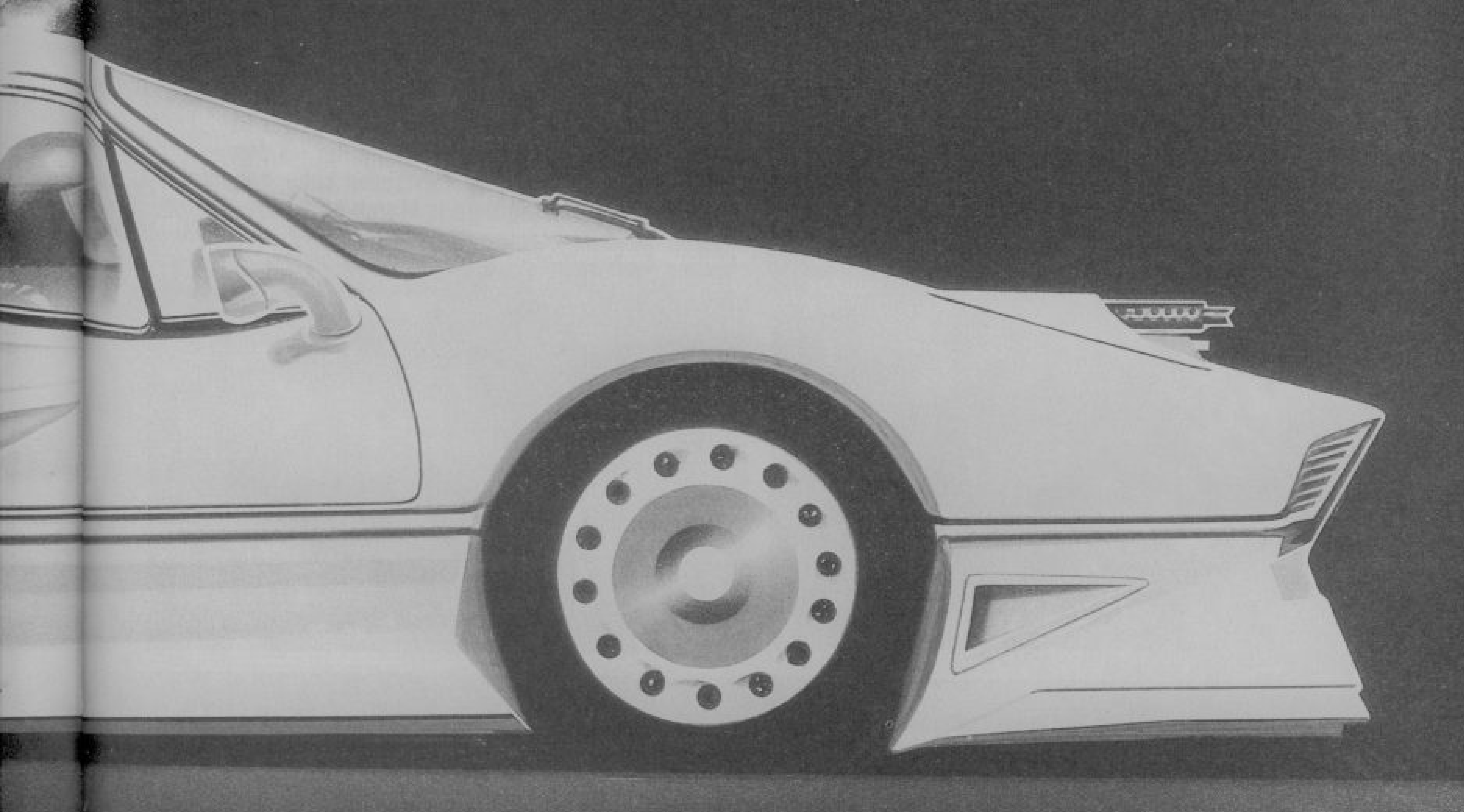
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N-N-N-NINETEEN C-C-C-COMPETITION

N-N-N-N-Now listen here. Get fell in for a n-n-n-nifty N-N-N-N-Nineteen competition, the Cascade game based on the anti-Vietnam war single of the same name.

First prize is a visit for you and a pal to *Combat Zone*, the fun battle game involving paint guns. The Zone is based near Brentwood in Essex and you will get £30 towards travelling expenses.

And that's not all. The winner also gets one pair of combat-style pocket binoculars (see picture), a copy of the hit single and a framed Nineteen poster, signed by the artist and game programmer.

The next three runners-up will get a pair of binoculars (see other picture), the record and signed poster.

So what do you have to do? It's simple, just answer the following questions and send your answer to N-N-N-N-Nineteen Competition, Computer + Video Games, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. The closing date is March 16th.





QUESTIONS

1) Who recorded the hit single Nineteen? Was it:
A) George Michael
B) Paul Hardcastle
C) Cliff Richard
Answer ____________________

2) Which of the following is not a Cascade game?
A) Implosion
B) Ringworld
C) Ace
D) [illegible]re 40
Answer ____________________

3) Who was President of the United States when the Vietnam War ended? Was it:
A) Richard Nixon
B) George Washington
C) Ronald Reagan
Answer ____________________

Tie-break. In not more than 25 additional words complete the following: I want world peace because

____

____

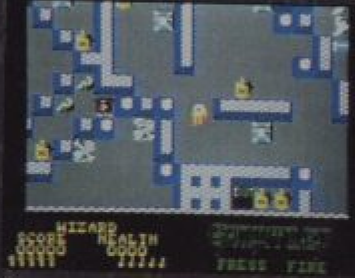
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N-N-N-NINETEEN C-C-C-COMPETITION

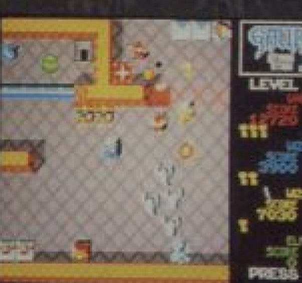
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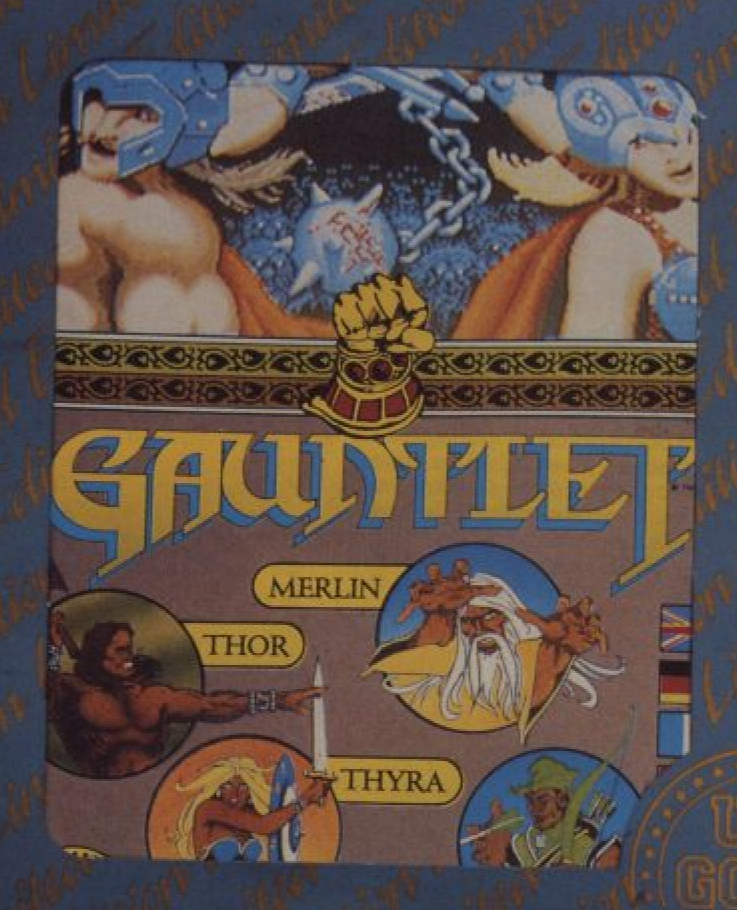
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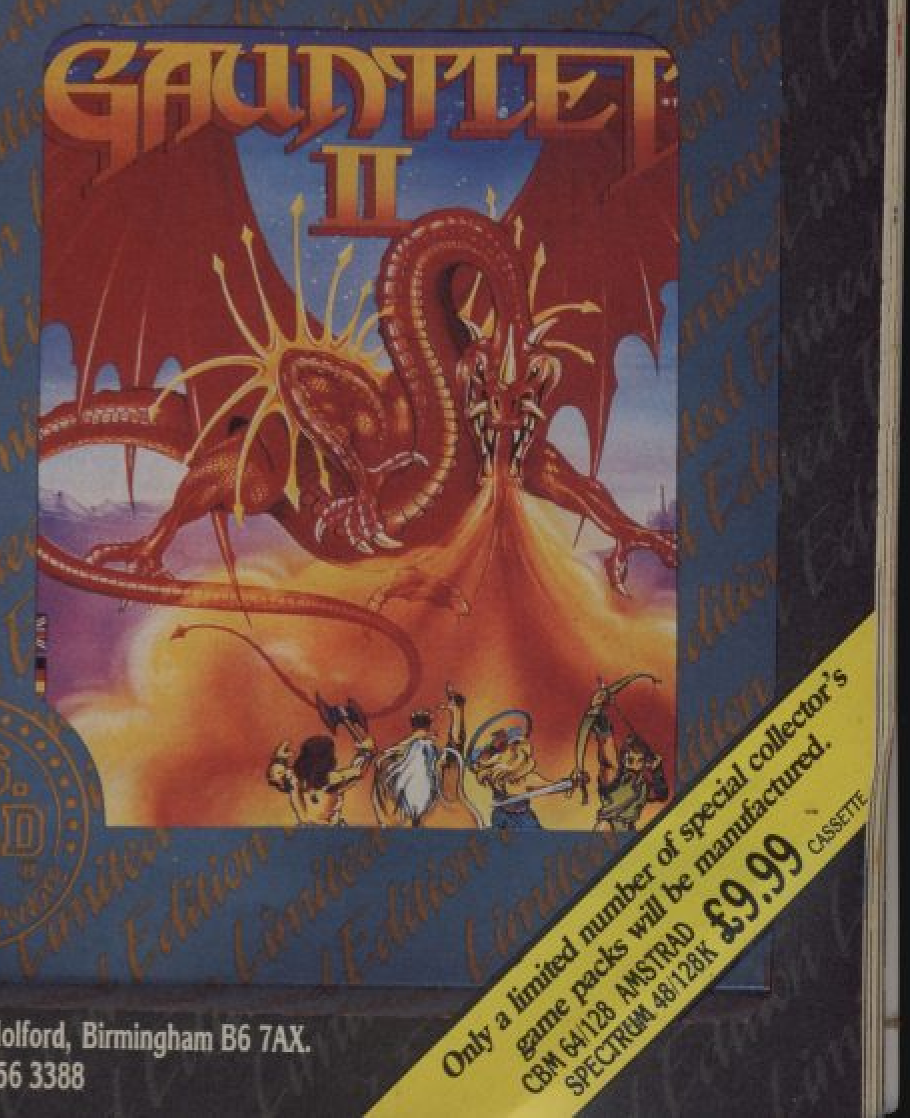
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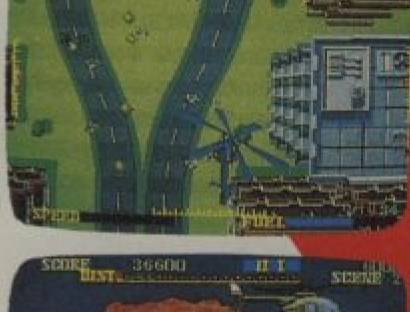
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It's show time again as the arcade game makers display their mega products. C+VG arcade ace *Clare Edgeley* samples the delights of *Thunder Blade, Ninja Warriors* and the rest.

It seems only yesterday that I was reporting on all the new games at last January's Amusement Trade Exhibition – ATE – and now it's come round again. The depression the coin-op industry was going through in 1985 seems well and truly over and a host of new games are waiting for the trigger happy in 1988. The show was slightly disappointing – there weren't masses of new innovative games around, rather a lot of good quality shoot 'em ups and punch 'em ups, all of which we've seen before in one shape or another.

Anyway, to kick off, I'll start with the biggies – dedicated games, which come in specially designed cabinets. These are always good games, generally cost more to play than your average blaster, but are addictive too.





● THUNDER BLADE

Sega had a strong presence at the show and was launching one game which had everyone talking – *Thunder Blade*. This is a helicopter simulation with several innovative features. It's instantly recognisable. The cabinet is shaped like a mini-chopper, resting on skis with a high bucket seat and the screen somewhere down at feet level. You can almost imagine yourself patrolling the skies, looking out of your perspex bubble as the ground rushes beneath your feet.

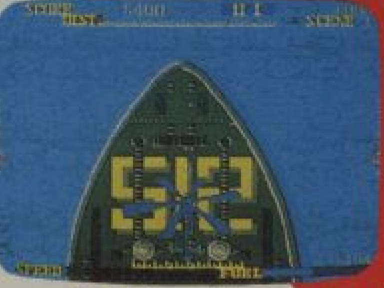
The quality of graphics and gameplay are superb. The control column accurately simulates all the moves of a fast moving helicopter – pull back and to one side and you'll rise while slipping to the left or right. Push forwards and you'll go into a screaming nosedive. Missile and cannon buttons are mounted on, the joystick and on your left is the speed control gear with notches to allow you to stop dead and hover, fly at quarter, half, three-quarters and full speed. It's vital to get the hang of changing your speeds because you're going to stay airborne.

The game starts with a demo run through a high rise building area – skyscrapers whizz past your blades, tanks on the ground fire rockets in an attempt to stop your headlong flight and enemy choppers launch into the attack. All too soon, the demo run turns into the game proper though I must say it makes a pleasant change to have a practise run first.

Swinging your chopper from side to side causes the cabinet to move accordingly – it's great. The game perspective changes all the time throughout this fast moving game. At the start you can bring your chopper down to ground level, skimming just above the road or, alternatively, rise to several thousand feet and bomb from above. Whatever your height, the view from your cockpit window – or on the screen at your feet – changes to take into account the different views. Very clever.

The first level is fairly simple, though I suspect the only reason I was able to get as far as I did was because I was playing for free! Otherwise I'd have been shovelling money into the machine like there was no tomorrow.

As soon as you've sailed through the city and got rid of or dodged



round the tanks and choppers, you'll find yourself flying over the ocean with a huge aircraft carrier as target. Bomb all the aircraft on its deck, put out of action all mounted cannons – no easy task as there are masses of them and they can swing in a full circle to sight on you.

On the second level the perspective changes to a bird's eye view of a steep sided canyon. The risk of taking your chopper down to ground level is all too real – you're more likely to end up splattered against the walls of the cliff.

There are lots more scenes and levels in this brilliant game. What's more, it should be in most arcades fairly soon and because it is driven mechanically and not through electronics the price of the beast is much lower. Hopefully it'll be pretty widespread.

● NINJA WARRIORS

Taito's *Ninja Warriors* is the newest martial arts simulation and is played on the same style cabinet as their previous game, *Darius*. It's a huge stand up cabinet with three screens joined together to provide one very long playing area. It works very well and has the advantage that you can see what's coming up long before you get to it.

The storyline differs slightly from Sega's *Shenobi* in so far as you don't have to rescue hostages. However, you must kill the soldiers of an evil dictator who's threatening to turn the state of El Cabar inside out. The Ninja – either one or two players – has been called in to rid the land of the dictator and so restore it to democratic rule.

Your first opponents are soldiers in combat gear and it's a simple matter to put them out of action. You don't even need to kick them as they run quite happily into the small dagger you're holding. Watch out for gun toting soldiers though, you'll have to crouch under or jump over their bullets. Either run forward while ducking the bullets to get close enough to stab them or throw a few shuriken. You only have a limited number of these so don't chuck them away.

Monster aliens soon appear which take several hits to kill, these are deadly and will cause you to blow a few fuses if they catch up with you. The first time this happened I couldn't believe my eyes. After all, whoever's heard of a robot ninja.

Guard dogs are another hazard and these tend to attack in packs. They are fairly easy to kill, though I wasn't sure about the wimper each dog gives as you put it down.

Ninja Warriors is fun to play and the extra long screen is a bonus, the graphics are great and the game's a challenge. But I feel that *Shenobi* is a more challenging game, as is *Vigilante*.

● *Twin Cobra*



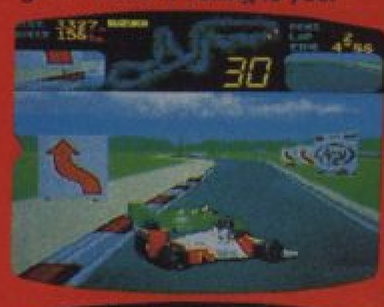


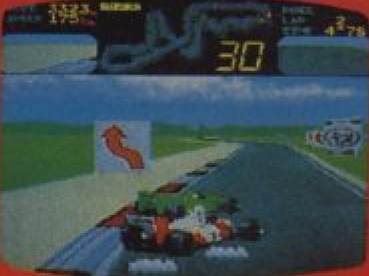


● FINAL LAP

Namco's *Final Lap* is another brilliant new innovation in which you can link-up eight racing cars together so that they can 'race' round the Suzuka Circuit racecourse in the same race. You're probably more likely to see two cars linked together as I should imagine the cost of buying eight of these machines, and the space needed to accommodate them, would be enormous.

The challenge when playing with only two people, who are total strangers, is fantastic. The two machines are placed side by side. You and your opponent start the race the same time and then the fun begins. The cars slide backwards and forwards on runners to simulate bursts of speed and whoever is in the lead at a given moment. Yelling to your





partner, you scream past him on the chicane, briefly you see his car on your screen as you overtake and your cabinet car slides forwards 'overtaking' him.

All too quickly, your opponent overtakes you as you crash trying to corner too fast. Using your gears and brake is really important – as I discovered to my cost.

You just spin and waste lots of valuable time getting back onto the track and building up your speed again. By this time your opponent is way ahead, though with careful, if fast, driving it's possible to make up lost ground fairly quickly. And as long as one of you beats the time for that lap, you'll both be awarded extended time to continue with the race. I believe there are about three laps to the race and whoever gets there first wins. I could be wrong, though – in the excitement I lost count.

The background graphics are pretty basic. They are not as detailed as in *Out Run* – they're just not necessary. After all, the excitement is in the challenge of the race and not in the scenery. The main playing window takes up most of the screen and a narrow band at the top of the screen is divided into three smaller windows. The outside two show sections of the track and act rather like wing mirrors, but it's the middle section which is most important. This shows the layout of the track, its chicanes and straights and tells you where you are in relation to your opponent.

Final Lap is a first class racing Sim, it's tremendously addictive and I'd love to play it when more than two cars are linked together. It's a definite must for all would be racing drivers. Full marks to Namco for a really competitive game.

● TWIN COBRA

Twin Cobra's is a vertically scrolling shoot 'em up with you in control of a chopper flying over enemy territory blasting everything that moves. Although this is basically the same scenario as *Thundercade*, *Twin Cobra*'s got a more gutsy feel to the game, making it far more of a challenge.

Tanks and the like must be blown up, enemy planes knocked out of the skies and bullets must be dodged. It's a bit like *Flying Shark* in that aspect. Collecting an 'S'





symbol increases your firepower, a 'B' adds one bomb to your supply and you can earn extra lives, more points and a selection of four new weapons by collecting symbols.

The cabinet I played the game on was a hi-tech sit down job which was very comfortable, especially as the screen is set at an angle to you and not flat as in more traditional table top games found in pubs. Fast moving with pretty graphics, *Twin Cobra* is a one or two player game which is bags more fun than *Thundercade*.



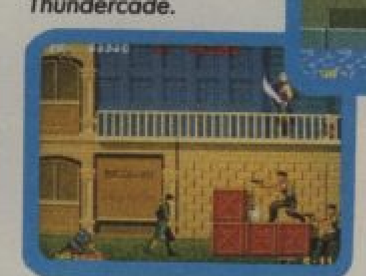
● SHENOBI

Martial arts games are still big news and at the ATE three new ones made their debut.

Shenobi, the martial arts sim from Sega, reminded me vaguely of Atari's *Rolling Thunder* in its clean colourful graphics and large well defined sprites. You play the hero Musashi, a master of Ninjutsu. Your object is to rescue hostages who are tied up at points throughout the game and to fight the big boss at the end of each level. None of the martial arts games differ greatly in their plot. *Shenobi*, however, features a bonus level after each stage.

You're given a limited supply of Shuriken (deadly stars) which, when thrown, kill the enemy outright. These are best saved for situations which can't be dealt with by one-to-one combat. The enemy comes at you with fists and guns. Jumping to higher levels is vital to avoid or ambush the enemy. Run over the hostages to free them and you'll earn yourself extra weapons. The more hostages saved the better your weapons. A magic ninja spell can be cast once on each stage and this results in your character turning into the Ninja equivalent of a smart bomb. It's hilarious though highly effective. Your figure remains standing still, while replicas of your character shoot out from the body and whiz round the screen, cannoning off the baddies like ping pong balls. When the spell is complete, you'll have a bunch of dead on your hands. That includes any hostages if they happen to be still tied up.

The bonus level is to prove your skill at throwing Shuriken and reminded me of playing *Discs of Tron*. The screen holds three platforms with one very close to you and the other two further away. The enemy appear on





● continued ▶


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furthest platform or ledge and jump from platform to platform to get at you. You must throw the Shuriken at those fast moving figures and put them out of action before they get too close. It's hard work and they need careful aim, but if you clear the screen you'll get the extra lives.

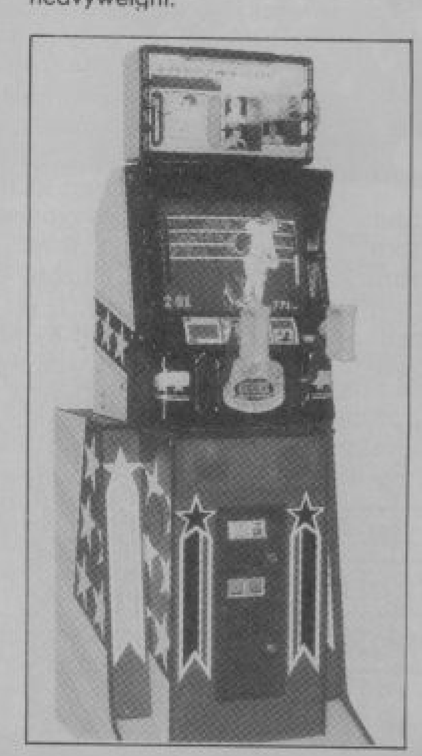
A map at the beginning of each level shows how far you've travelled and by the look of things, it will take you a fair amount of time to clear the three or four stages on each of the five missions assigned to you.

Fast moving and very challenging, *Shenobi* is well worth playing. I particularly liked it for the controls which weren't too complex. A straightforward kick and punch game with bags of action.

● HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMP

Heavyweight Champ from Sega is a boxing simulation that resembles *Punch Out!!* in that you are seen as a semi-transparent figure with your back to the screen fighting a very solid opponent. However, where the controls are concerned, Heavyweight Champ is in a category of its own. For instead of punch buttons, you have two levers sticking out from the side of the machine which must be swung and punched inwards to simulate your player's hooks and jabs.

This must be the most exhausting game I've ever played. By the time I'd got my first knock out, my arms were so tired I couldn't even have bopped a featherweight on the nose let alone another bout with a heavyweight.

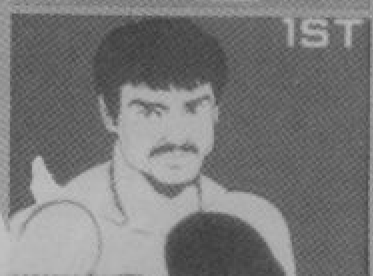






Swinging the monitor from side to side allows defence and blocks while punching and turning the levers lets you go in for the attack.





● BLASTEROIDS

Atari's *Blasteroids* came as a bit of a surprise. Firstly, because it's so playable and secondly because it's a 3D, highly coloured and enhanced version of their 1979 classic, *Asteroids*. Still retaining the old movement patterns and basic gameplay, *Blasteroids* has been given a brand new image. It's brilliant, and will revive all the old skills.

There are lots of new features, the main ones allowing you to pick up bonuses like extra firepower, energy and shields which are obtained by shooting the enemy and picking up whatever they drop.

Energy crystals can be found by shooting red asteroids. These explode into a zillion fragments leaving behind the crystals. Picking them up can be a problem as they float through the space scape.

Once you've got the hang of your turn and thrust controls, the job should be much easier. Blasting some objects gives you a magnet which attracts all crystals in the area to your ship. This is a real bonus when playing with a partner as you'll come out a winner while his ship comes to a virtual standstill!

All the bonuses are disguised and you'll need to learn which ships, stars or rocks are concealing energy boosters, tanks of fuel or even the ripstar. This latter object acts like a smart bomb and explodes with a catherine wheel effect, shattering everything in range.

There are 16 sectors to a galaxy, each carrying a new space scene and accompanied by various nasties. The worst aliens I came across were space lobsters which clutch your ship with deathly claws. The only way to get rid of these monsters is for your partner to blast them off you.

The sectors are quickly cleared and a transporter window soon appears to suck you into its vortex. The first person into this window gets extra points and is allowed to choose the next sector.

You can change the size of your ship to large, medium or small to help get through different sectors. Large means you lack the speed to fly quickly out of dodgy situations, but at least if you're hit, your ship doesn't lose so much power. Small size works the opposite way round, but as you can change quickly at the press of a button, you should be able to combat most situations.

Blasteroids is being heralded by Atari as a 'Blast from the Past'. It's brilliant and, like listening to an old record, it'll awaken lots of memories.

● VIGILANTE

Vigilante is very fast, punchy and similar to *Double Dragon* in style.

You play the hero who's got to save Madonna (!) from a bunch of skinheads who're holding her captive. The streets are full of thugs, law and order are words of the past and single handed you must kick the thugs where it hurts.

Weapons like Nunchakus can be found en route and will be needed to fight knife wielding delinquents. This is a game which takes you through the meanest streets in the town, the type of place where cars are found dumped in the gutters, where everybody carries a gun or uses a knife. The scenery is depicted in minute detail and sets the scene brilliantly.

The baddies wear different uniforms, and the colour of their clothes will tell you how to approach them. Some will need to be hit several times before they topple, others will fall at the slightest hint of resistance. At the end of each level you'll meet a monster thug – don't you always – and he must be hit again and again before he dies. It's a help at this point if you've picked up an extra weapon.

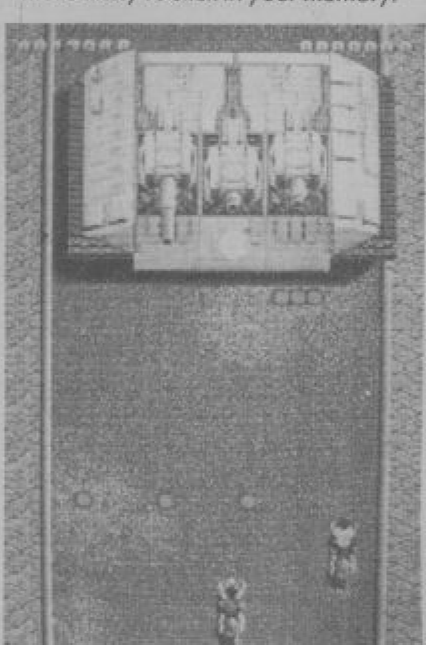
And so this hard hitting game continues, level after level. The fifth stage is fantastic as it's played on the girders of a bridge high above ground level. The skins and thugs scramble up the struts of the bridge to cut you off, and the only way to save yourself is to punch them off balance and throw them into the void. Gaps in the girders don't help matters, especially when it comes to fighting the monster at the end of the level. If he gets close enough he'll pick you up by the scruff of the neck and pound you to pulp before hurling you to the ground. It's a long drop, though if you've got your wits about you, you can grab onto the side of the girder and hoist yourself back up for more punishment. I thought that was a really nice touch.

Vigilante is great – fans of *Double Dragon* will love it.

● THUNDERCADE

Thundercade from Taito is a vertically scrolling shoot 'em up and is not particularly brilliant. The only thing really different about this one, as you travel up the screen blasting away at tanks, enemy outposts and soldiers is that you're riding a motorbike.

The graphics are tiny and a bit flickery. The aim of the game is to collect extra weapons and a side car with mounted cannon for your bike. The further you travel up the screen, the harder the going with more enemy, tanks and guns. Not a game that's going to shake the world. Taito's *Twin Cobra* is much more likely to stick in your memory.



Wayne's PLAY BY MAIL.

The big news this month must be that Legend Incorporated Ltd, the company that runs **AE's**, has ceased to be a full time professional company. Due to the vast success the company has achieved in its short lifetime, both the founding gamesmasters have been offered positions in other areas of employment, so they have decided to run the land of **AE's** solely on a part time basis and this means taking on only a total of between thirty to fifty players between them.

Of course this is going to come as a great shock to the many players that are not going to be allowed to play any longer, as in some circles it was rated as one of, if not the, best Fantasy Role Playing P.B.M. in the U.K. In fact one of their G.M.s Jon Tode, won the Best G.M. award at the 1987 P.B.M. conference, an honour not easily won. The question on everybody's lips is: "What do the ex-players do now?

At present Legend are inviting other P.B.M. companies of a similar nature to put flyers into their cessation package (at a price!) that will notify the unfortunate players that Legend has rejected, what other fantasy P.B.M. games are available on the market at present. The choice is quite a wide one, so I won't go into it. All I can say is pick one that you think may suit you and look back in previous *C+VG* copies to see if I have reviewed it.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish both gamesmasters, Jon Tode and Bob Moss all the best in there future employment, as although we had our differences of opinion, they were undoubtedly 101% dedicated to the game, which is the reason behind why they did not sell it. Quite simply, they did not wish to see their labour of love in another company's hands.

Anyway, by the time, this column has hit the streets, the Third P.B.M. convention will be well and truly over. In the next issue. I will be bringing you a full report on what happened, who won the awards and any other events of importance. There should also be a few piccies to give you an idea of what you missed. I would be only too glad to hear the comments and criticism on the event from any *C+VG* readers who attended. We can only improve future conventions by feed back, so please get writing. I really would like to know what you thought of it. To tempt you to put pen to paper, I will line up free start ups in various games for the most interesting 20 or so letters.



Busy, busy, busy, that is the only way to describe the P.B.M. scene at the moment! Yes, it's all go, with lots of special offers for all you P.B.M'ers out there, so let's get on with keeping you up to date with the news and views from the ever changing world of P.B.M. Remember though, that if you apply for more than one offer you must send the relevant amounts of S.S.A.E's required or you will only receive the first offer you ask for!

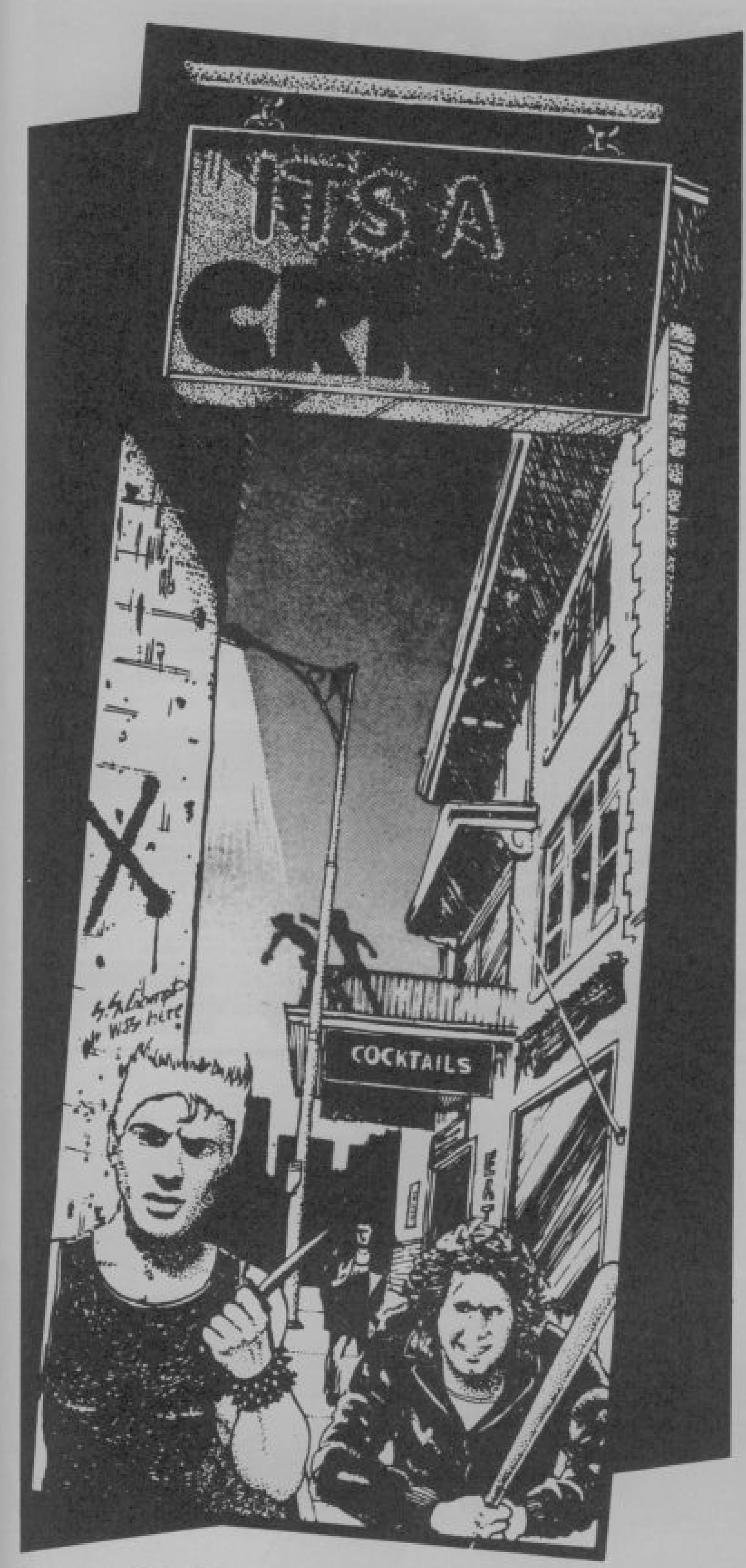
Speaking of the convention. The G.Ms from Time Pattern games, the company that runs that great purist sci fi P.B.M., **Starglobe**, informed me that they are laying down the law to certain players. Apparently within the game an insidious tactic is appearing with increasing rapidity, which spoils the whole concept behind it. What happens is that a few players ring other players up out of the blue at home and spread wild and threatening rumours. The tactic is designed to frighten you out of the game and so leave your possessions available for collection by other players. If this cheating tactic happens to you, you would do best to ignore everything that is said and report it to the G.Ms in your next turn. The people at Starglobe have instructed me to tell all Starglobe players that you should NEVER, EVER give out your ship or account number to other players for any reason at all!!

Moving on to the *C+VG* game of **It's A Crime,** the curse of Wayne has struck again!! As I write not only have the gangs mentioned in the Feb issue of C+VG slid down the table quite dramatically, but we have new leaders in the Notoriety table for the umpteenth time?

At numero uno position at the moment are the *Meathead Brigade*, with 687 points, closely followed by *The Axemen,* with 656 and *The Street Freaks* with 644.

Other notables are *The Street Angels,* who are fifth with 630 points, *Satansfist,* who slip down to tenth with 601 points and the *Lumps of Green Putty* who nosedive down the table with only 494 points. The *Fighting Falcons* obtains the most notoriety in a week, with a tremendous law braking 109 points, whilst the Toughest are the *Iron Angels,* the wealthiest are *The Merchant Bankers* (well named that man!!) and the gang with the highest income is *The Lonely Emingonrants.*

● There is a new P.B.M. orientated based Fanzine out called *Totally Zane.* It is produced and edited by Mrs Linda Little and is well worth a read. Issue 0 contains a couple of short stories — one by that famous author Andrew Prentice — a P.B.M. which all purchasers of the mag can play for free and is loosely based on certain well known political figures, F.R.P. coverage, a serious discussion page that is very interesting indeed and a regular P.B.M. feature



amongst other things.

Issue 1 is the better of the two in my opinion and contains a *Saturnalia* review by yours truly, as well as hot tips on the same game from an ex Sat G.M., another excellent Andrew Prentice story (how does she afford to get him to write for her Fanzine?), mini reviews of four other P.B.Ms plus poetry, more stories, F.R.P. coverage and a lot, lot more.

Each copy of *Totally Zane* costs just 75p plus a A4 s.s.a.e. and is well worth the money. Just write into me and make cheques payable to Mrs L. Little and I will pass them on.

By the way, I have ten free copies of *Totally Zane 0* to give away, and they will be given to the best ten artistic interpretations of Mrs Little, so get drawing!!

Epic and Eclipse Competition Results

There are too many winners of the competition for me to be able to print a list of the winners. However, if you have not heard by now you can be fairly confident that you haven't won. Sorry about that.

CRISIS

Crisis was created by an American called Rick Darn. Apparently he was fed up with all the complex and technical global warfare games about, so not being able to find a simple one to play, he decided to invent his own. Mystery and Adventure Games snapped up the British rights to it and have been running it for just under two years.

Crisis is a computerised world domination P.B.M. which consists of twelve people per game. You play the leader of one of the leading countries on 21st century Earth and by the use of Inter Continental Balistic Missiles (ICMBs), factories and diplomacy you attempt to become the most dominanant world power.

You'll find that 21st century Earth has been divided in to many countries, some of which do not really exist today, and they are considered adjacent to each other if they are connected to each other on the game map by a dotted line.

You start off with 33 tax revenues, 30 factories, 5 forts and a population of 200 and with this little lot you are expected to achieve world domination. The game is winnable and you achieve this as follows: Either you are the last player country to be left alive after the demise of all the other player countries of you and ALL the players in an alliance declare a tie in the same round. However, not only can you win the game, but you can be eliminated as well. Elimination is achieved by having your home country conquered or, alternatively, having all your population wiped out.

Playing the game

The game has a strict 10 to 12 day fixed deadline turn around. Each turn you receive a decision sheet. On this sheet you write your orders and send them back to the G.M. The orders you have to choose from are:

Send Spies

This enables you to send profesional secret service agents to spy on foreign countries. You may send up to three spies to three different countries and you are informed of what each country contains as well as the names of the other countries that the infiltrated country may well be at war with.

Divisional Movement

Divisions are conventional ground forces that are used to attack adjacent countries or defend against their attacks. A division may only move one country per turn. Each turn a player may give one and only one divisional movement order to the divisions in his own country and the countries which his home country controls. Basically, a division in a given country can receive only one movement order per turn.

Launch I.C.B.M.

This is self-explanatory really, you launch a missile at another country which, if successful, destroys one population and one factory in a target country.

Factories

A factory produces money!! As we know, money is the key weapon to winning this game, so they are vitally important. If your population is destroyed than all your factories are automatically destroyed as well.

Forts

Forts cost 5 TRs to build and may be built in any country a player controls. Forts give a combat bonus to defending divisions only, which can be quite substantial. It really depends on how many divisions are in that country, the more divisions the greater the bonus.

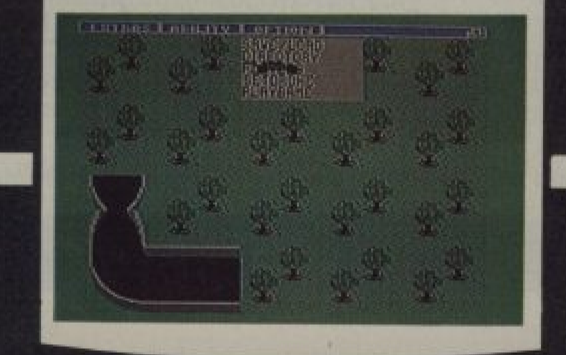
Non Player Countries

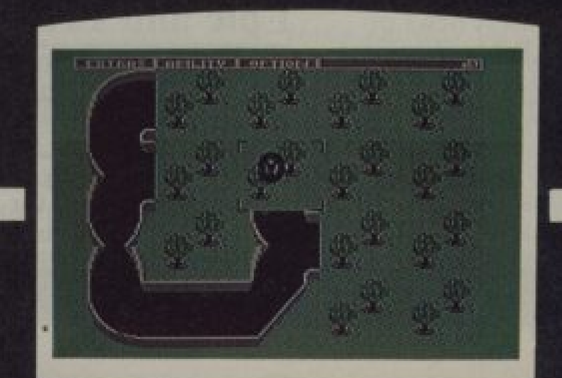
These are countries that are not controlled by any of the twelve players, but by the computer. You may wish to



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Wayne's PLAY BY MAIL.

note that these countries build forces each turn just as a player's country does, but they tend to create divisions in preference to missiles. N.P.C.s will only attack if provoked and have been known to eliminate player characters from the game!! However, these countries never build forts.

Restriction Of Orders

To balance the game out, there are certain restrictions placed on the orders that you can issue. For example:

You may only write a maximum of ten divisional movements and only nine I.C.B.M. orders per turn.

Each country you control may make only one divisional movement per turn.

You may not move more divisions out of a country than the number that started there.

Hints and Tips

If you intend playing this game here are a few things you should know:
Cover your world map with the clear cellophane that is used to cover books in Libraries. Then buy some chinagraph pencils and use them to mark of where your troops have moved, what areas you controls etc. The great thing about these is that they can be wiped off with a damp cloth.

You should expand your area of control rapidly, taking over your N.P.C. neighbours swiftly and clinically.

Write to every other player country as soon as possible. Establish a basis of negotiations with a peace pact, then when it suits you, stab your weakest ally in the back. Be mean!!

Most games last around thirty turns and people start getting knocked out on average around turn five or six, so be extra alert when this period arrives.

Use the newsheet to create lots of scandal and rumour. Worry your opponents' allies, spread lots of propaganda and incite chaos. It is to your advantage. Your spies should be able to provide you with a good source of information to use as you please.

Wayne's Verdict

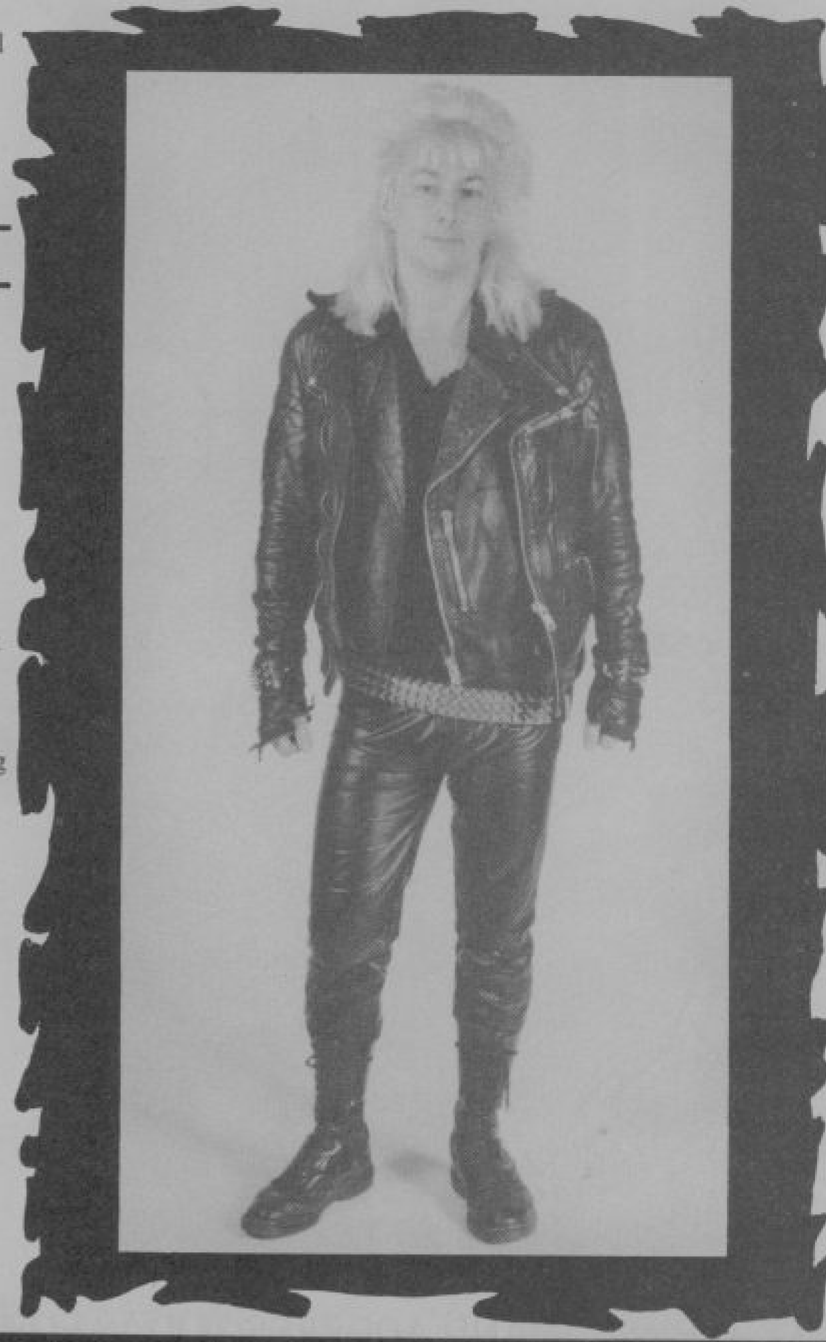
Crisis is a very, very easy game to play. It is ideal for a P.B.Mer who has thought of moving from the fantasy games to strategic/tactical games, but has been frightened off by complex rules. The "**Crisis**" rulebook is only 13 pages long and written in straightforward, simple English. I found the rules easily understandable and a joy to read. Furthermore, the examples are well thought out, clear and precise in detail. There is great scope for diplomacy within the game and contacting other players is a must. I find that this part of the game may well attract the more experienced players, as although they will whizz through the turnsheet with ease, the diplomatic side needs to be handled with great care.

The rumour/newsheet that is issued every turn is full of info. However it is up to you to sort out the truth from the lies. It is an entertaining read.

The game has been created in order for the player to get a very fast turn around period and, to draw a comparison, it is somewhat similar to the board game called "Risk".

On the negative side however, I found the rulebook's actual presentation very basic, with the only artwork being on the rulebook's cover. The artwork itself is not that amazing, but I must admit to being quite amused by the C.N.D. symbol on the back cover.

The G.M. informs me that the original basic A4 map that is in my possession has recently been enlarged to A3 size and redrawn for clarity. This is a blessing because I found the old map somewhat limited. Furthermore, the price of £1.25 per turn was a bit pricey, but I have checked this out with the company directors and negotiation is where Wayne comes to the fore!!



Wayne's Wonderful Offer

Yes, once again I have punished my body via the terrible ordeal of physically dragging the G.M.s of **Crisis** down the pub and quaffing many, many pints of lager, so that I, Wayne the benevolent, can get you the loyal readers an offer you can't refuse. So how about this.

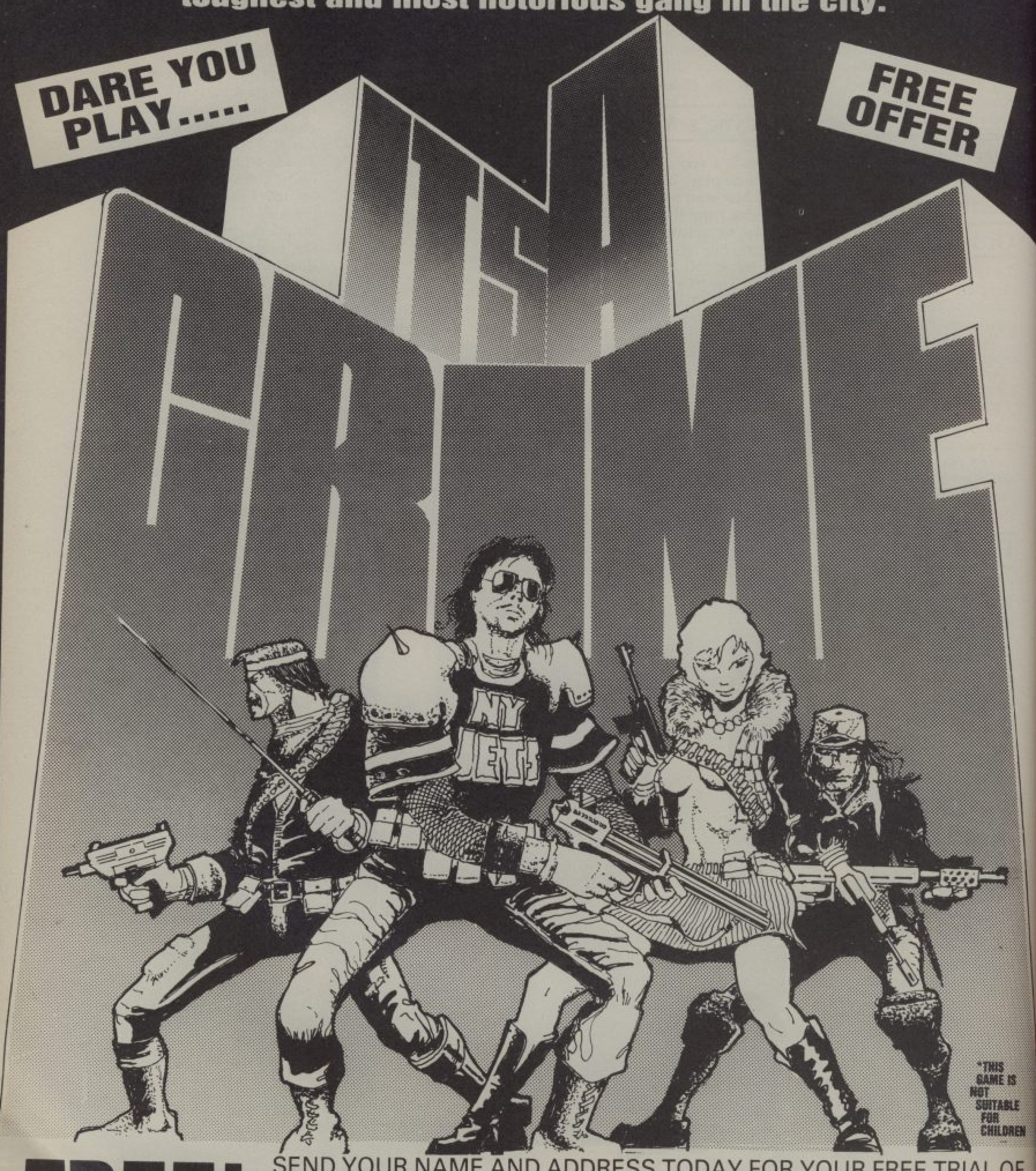
Any reader who writes in with the logo above and a s.s.a.e. will get a FREE set up, FREE rule book AND three FREE turns in "**Crisis**". This offer will save you the massive sum of £4.50. Also, if you pay for ten turns, you get a turn free.

Furthermore, I have arranged with that if enough *C+VG* readers stay with the game after their free rounds have expired, the people at Mystery and Adventure Games promised me that they will drop the price of their turns buy anything UP TO a maximum of 50p, so the future price of the turns is in your hands. I believe that most of the people who take up this offer will stay with the game anyway, as it is worth playing. Enjoy!

Finally, I would remind you that I am here to sort your P.B.M. problems out at all times. If you have any sort of P.B.M. problem whatsoever, just drop me a line with an s.s.a.e. and I will do my best to sort it out. See ya in thirty!!

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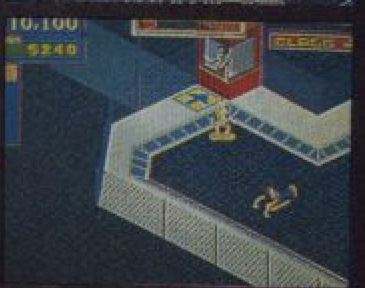
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PLATOON

The first casualty of war may well be innocence as the film Platoon suggests very strongly. But if you play Ocean's excellent game of the film you will discover that the first casualty here is likely to be your nerves, especially when you get stuck into its combat and puzzles. To get you out of trouble here is a map of Level one and hints and tips courtesy of Ocean's Zack Townsend and illustrator Nick Grant.

S

S-start E-explosives B-bridge T-torch M-map 

Level 1: The Jungle

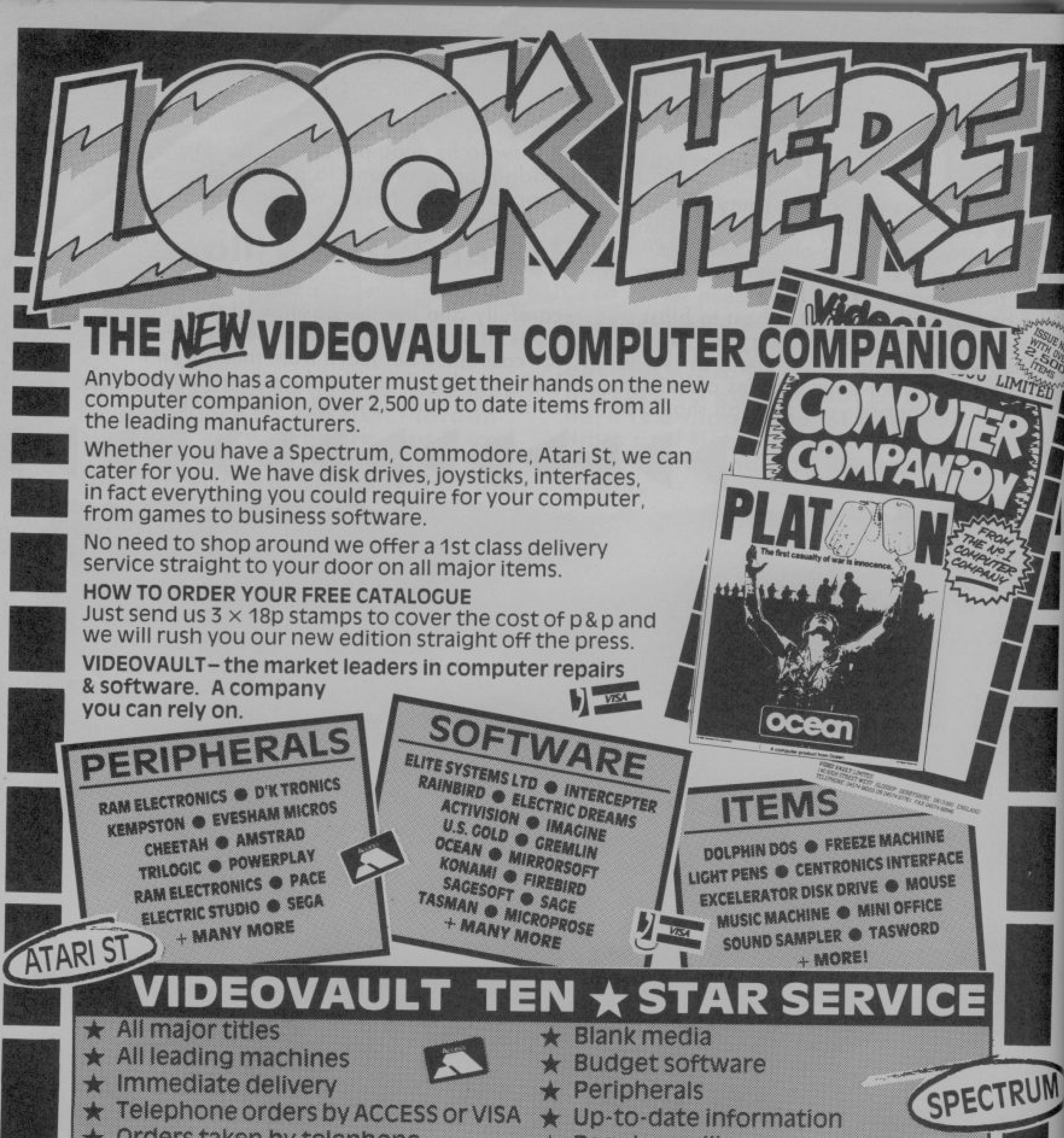
The map shows the correct route to follow to the Viet Kong village. Whilst travelling you must keep moving all the time otherwise a Viet Kong soldier may jump on you from above. Traps have been set on the brown pathway — it is best to blast these before jumping to clear your way. When your morale is low, shoot at regular intervals to lessen your chances of being hit. If a member of your platoon should be hit, swap to another. When you destroy the bridge, hang around to pick up medical supplies which the VC will drop when you blast them.

Level 2: The Village

The key to this level is to search the huts carefully and not the position of the booby traps. It's trial and error — be prepared for casualties but learn from them. Don't lose your head and let the villagers have it as this will seriously sap your morale.



ut ✦-exit(trapdoor)



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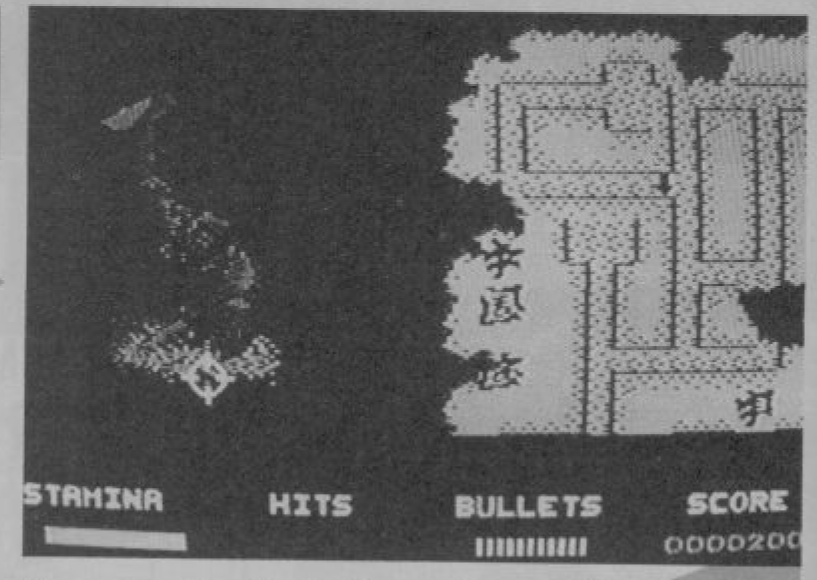


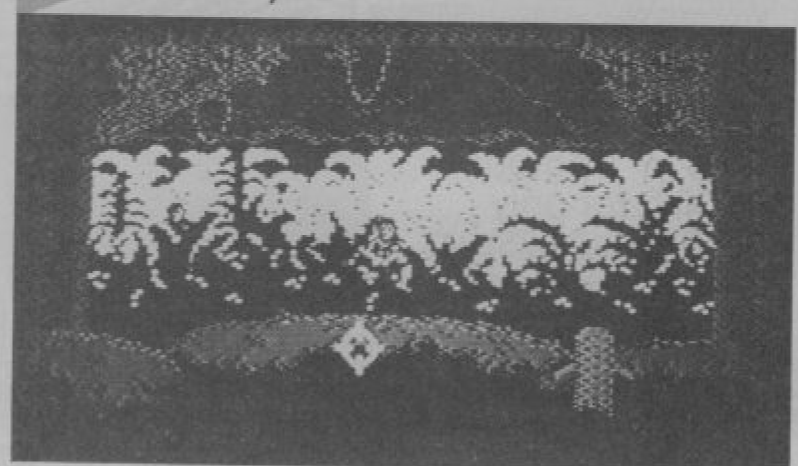
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PLATOON

Level 3: The Village

This is mapped for you, so make sure you use it. Your objective on this level is to find the compass and two packs of flares. It is important to locate all of these items as you will need them later. Use ammo sparingly as it is in short supply. Search everything in every room and use the rooms for rest when necessary.





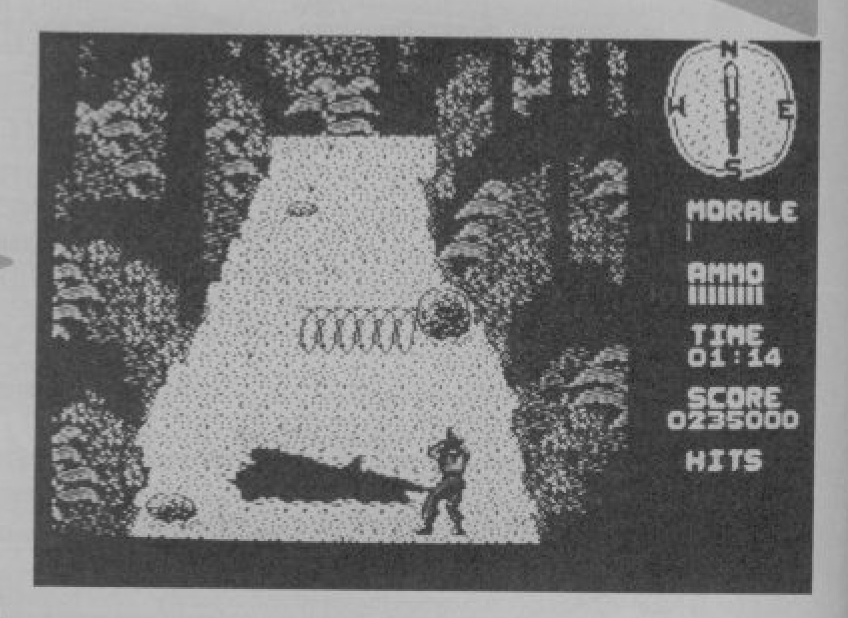
Level 4: The Bunker

Again use ammo sparingly — a short burst should be enough to dispose of any attacker. Take out each attacker as speedily as possible. This is important as towards the end they speed up and will kill you if you give them any leeway. Send up a flare as soon as you have killed one VC as this will enable you to locate the next attacker. Turning off the music enables you to hear their gunfire.

Level 5: The Jungle

A short burst of gunfire as you enter each new screen will take out at least one of the enemy. On screens with lots of obstacles, stay at the bottom until no more VC run on. On less crowded screens dash to the top as quickly as you can to make up the time lost on more difficult screens.

The quickest route to follow is as follows: at the junctions go left, then right and at the last one go right again.



YOU MADE IT !

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PRESS FIRE TO ENTER YOUR ACHIEVEMENT

Level 6: Barnes

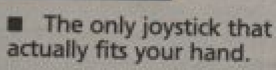
The game pauses slightly at the beginning of this level to give you time to compose yourself for the final and toughest challenge — the fight with the deranged Sergeant Barnes.

Go straight for the grenades when the action resumes. Move from left to right constantly, Barnes always fires straight at your position. You will need five direct grenade hits on Barnes' bunker to complete the game — hop aboard the rescue chopper and see the congratulatory screen come up which informs you you are on your way home.

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ADVENTURE ZONE

news

Pretty nearly every early BBC micro owner will have heard of **Philosopher's Quest.** It was the first adventure written for the computer, and heralded a series of adventures published by Acornsoft, most of which were written by Peter Killworth.

Unlike most successful adventures, these were never converted to other formats. But now, Topologika announce the release of **Philospher's Quest,** and an extended **Countdown To Doom,** both by Peter Killworth, plus **Acheton,** and **Kingdom Of Hamil.** On disk only, versions available are: Amstrad CPC (£9.95); Amstrad PCW £14.95; IBM PC £17.50. The BBC version is available on disk (40/80) at £9.95.

Return To Doom, a follow up to **Countdown** written by Peter Killworth, is planned for release early in 1988.

Another fanzine from the same stable as Adventure Probe, is Soothsayer. Edited by Sandra Sharkey, and costing £1 per issue (UK), with rates for Europe and the rest of the world, it concentrates on complete solutions, often including maps. Most solutions consist of a straightforward list of commands.

By way of example of the contents, issue No. 2 included solutions to: **Bugsby Part 2, Castle Thade, Star Wreck,** Level 9's **Colossal Adventure, Dragon's Tooth, Karyssia, The Lost Crystal, The Mural, Rigel's Revenge, Top Secret, Zork 2** and **Valkyrie 17.**

Bard's Tale 1 has recently been released by Electronic Arts for the Atari ST at £24.95. Fans of this game will be pleased to hear that sequels are on the way . . . watch C+VG for exclusive details and competition!

The first adventure from Fergus McNeil's Abstract Concepts, **Mindfighter,** is due to be released by Activision during March. Based on a novel by Anna Popkess, the game will feature the new Abstract Concepts/Delta 4 adventure system, with heavy emphasis on character interaction.

• Do you like the new Infocoms games **Border Zone** and **Beyond Zork?** I play **Beyond Zork** on an Atari ST — it's fantastic! I found two bugs: when you go in the cellar, CLOSE the door and go up, you get the closed door "thrown in your face". *Stephan Englhart, West Germany*

Keith's reply: Thanks for the advance warning! Neither of the 'BZ' adventures are out on any format in the UK at the time of writing. Despite assurances from Infocom that releases would be simultaneous worldwide.

helpline

What do you look for in an adventure review? **Christopher Waite** of Boreham Wood thinks there should be more screen shots, even if they show text only. For example, says Christopher, for a game like **Guild of Thieves,** a text shot would be more important in the long run in helping to decide whether to buy the game. Any comments? And in that game, who can help him see in the dark after he has passed over the hot coals?

Paul Richardson has been reading the **C+VG** adventure column since the very first issue. Anyone who has stayed with it that long surely deserves an answer to his problems! Who can tell Paul how to open the sliding door in the reception area in **The Big Sleaze,** and who knows how to answer the Rigellian Guards, in **Rigel's Revenge?**

Valkyrie 17 seems to be making a comeback! After months of silence, suddenly two mentions in this month's mail! To help you with the endgame, look in the clues section.

Paul Hardy wrote to say he had become a 'Clever Contact' in Zzap! Wow!! The very thought is enough to blow the mind, is it not? The rest of Paul's letter was full of Venom! He cannot get past Harg, hasn't found a use for the berries, and is having trouble with the snakes. Does the river have to be crossed, and how? Where is the idol? What use is the thong? What should one do in Tirlan's room? How are the stone watchers passed? Other than that, Paul's doing fine!

Who, other than **Richard Hands** of Lichfield, has heard of Mogul's **Great Adventure Pack?** Or **Four Gates To Freedom** by Phoenix? Not me I'm afraid! These are adventures for the Vic 20 (there are still some around???) and Richard is trying to siphon gasoline in the first, and to complete the second.

Who can help **Andrew Baranowski** get past the Doberman in **Dodgy Geezers?**

And finally a hint from Anita Sinclair. "You don't need to play **Jinxter** to enter the beer mat competition," she explains. You do need to have proof of purchase, but there's no hidden clues in the game, so don't waste time, get your entries in now. You stand a chance to win all Magnetic Scrolls' games for life! You gotta be on to a good wossname, narmean?

Each month I award one year's free subscription for The Adventurers Club Ltd, worth £12, to the most deserving Helpline correspondent. This month's award goes to **Gregory Quinn,** of Portadown, Northern Ireland.

Gregory has been writing regularly for over two years now, so regularly that I have learned to read his writing! (Just joking, Greg! Ever thought of getting a printer . . . ?) Gregory is a dedicated adventure player, who has solved many games, ranging from humble cassette adventures to mega-adventures on disk. And he has sent many solutions in, to help other readers.

You too could win a subscription! But even if you don't, you'll certainly get a reply, if you write! So if YOU are having any difficulties with an adventure, can help someone else who's stuck, then write to me, Keith Campbell, at **Adventure Helpline, Computer + Video Games,** Priory Court, 30/32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.

VALKYRIE 17:
The camera wants a shave?
GNOME RANGER:
The unicorn may help gain entry — and he smells!
RIGEL'S REVENGE:
Pull it, pull it hard, and then bend it up!
JINXTER:
Heat is the key to the mailbox; cold helps get the sack. Another noisy door? Put a sock in it.
SEE KA OF ASSIAH:
Open the red valve, light the gas, then open the green valve, to melt the ice.
SPYTREK:
Dig high to please the cat.
LURKING HORROR:
Show the urchin something horrific to deal with his brothers.

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

ADVENTURE reviews

Many home-grown mail-order-only adventures have dropped through our letter box since the Quill, the Graphic Adventure Creator and the Professional Adventure Writer were released.

This month Keith Campbell takes a look at three such adventures, and finds out about the people behind the games.

BENEATH FOLLY

AUTHOR PROFILE
The Faringdon Fiend

Born of an insatiable desire to complete *The Sorceror of Claymorgue Castle,* The Fiend first rose from his murky cave in the village of Faringdon in Oxfordshire, to plague the C+VG Adventure mailbag with insults and invective during 1985, when he discovered his first kitchen cabinet.

Contrary to popular belief, The Fiend still remains anonymous even to us here at C+VG. He doesn't tolerate adventure fools gladly, he eats them, as readers of his regular ego-trip column will know. But do they realise that the cheque for this series of diatribes has to be made payable to The Fiend – and gets cashed?!

- **SUPPLIER: THE FIEND**
- **MACHINES: SPECTRUM/ COMMODORE 64**
- **PRICE: £3.99 (MAIL ORDER)**
- **AVAILABLE FROM: THE FIENDERY, ELM ROAD, FARINGDON, OXFORDSHIRE**
- **REVIEWER: KEITH**

The Folly stands atop Folly Hill in the village of Faringdon in Oxfordshire. The rock beneath, legend has it, is riddled with caves, and therein dwells – The Fiend!

Many an adventure author and writer lives in fear of the self-styled Groper and Public Nuisance, bane of the local populace, and bete-noire of C+VG. Buried deep beneath The Folly, in his time off from his demanding occupatión of nuisancing and groping, The Fiend has been painstakingly working on his Master Plan – the enslavement of all adventurer players in the land.

Beneath Folly is the result, an adventure game so awesome in its concept as to make the faint-hearted quake as it loads. Here you will find not a feeble quest, but fiendish problems so diabolical, as to weary the strongest of minds.

Finding yourself standing in a pentagram in a cave of solid rock, your objective is to outwit and escape The Fiend. An obvious door in the east wall proves nothing more than the simplest of traps. The pentagram itself may well destroy you should you try to step outside of it.

There IS a way out, of course, and to help you find it, a full solution comes with the game. Ha ha ha ha ha! I had a copy, too! What sort of solution would you expect from a Fiend? Even with its help, it took me three or four hours before I was out of that cave, only to find myself facing a very wide crack that seemed to bar any further progress!

And at every attempt to cross it I was greeted with a barrage of fiendish abuse. "Imbecile!" "Idiot!"

To get anywhere, it is essential to EXAMINE everything possible, and, above all, to read what you see very carefully. It is all too easy to think you understand



what is written on the screen, without truly understanding it.

This is a graphic adventure written using The GAC. The graphics are simple, but only the simple-minded would ignore them or dismiss them.

Presented in a flexible plastic cassette case, the inlay pictures the menacing silhouette of The Fiend, the tower of The Folly standing out behind him against a moonlit sky. On the reverse side of the tape, comes Fiend Music. DON'T play it through your computer cassette player, or you will be disappointed! Put it on a proper stereo system with a bit of oomph in it, turn

THE CASE OF THE MIXED UP SHYM

AUTHOR PROFILE
Sandra Sharkey

The Hobbit is the game which got Sandra Sharkey hooked on adventure. But since those days, Sandra has launched a monthly Adventure fanzine, *Adventure Probe,* and kept it going for nearly two years.

Adventure Probe came about through Sandra's dissatisfaction with other fanzines at the time, which concentrated far too much for her liking, on solutions, and not enough on reviews and articles of a more general nature.

Probe, which costs £1 per issue, currently has about 200 subscribers, gleaned mainly through mentions in adventure columns in a number of national monthlies.

- **SUPPLIER: SHARKSOFT**
- **MACHINES: AMSTRAD CPC**
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- **AVAILABLE FROM: ADVENTURE PROBE, 78 MERTON ROAD, HIGHFIELD, WIGAN, WN3 6AT.**
- **REVIEWER: KEITH**

What exactly a Shymer is, I'm not sure. According to my dictionary it is something unmentionable between a Shylock and a shyster. So you'll get no clue as to what the game is all about from the title.

A quick look at the intro informs you that you play the part of Shirley Combes, Sherlock Holmes' private secretary. Sherlock is away on a case, when you get a telephone call. There have been riots by nursery school children on the Isle of Nursree, because all the rhymes are wrong. They must be put right to bring peace back to the schools.

Forget the Sherlock background (why do so many adventure publishers go to such great lengths to build an impressive background that has nothing to do with the real plot?) and take it from me that the game is based on nursery rhymes.

In *Shymer* you will meet such characters as Lucy Locket, Kitty Fisher, Tom Tom, and Mary Mary. To score points you have to make the nursery rhymes come true. For example, you'll come across Humpty Dumpty sitting on a wall, boasting how he can fall off and bounce back again in one piece.



Personally, the plot is not my cup of tea, but if you





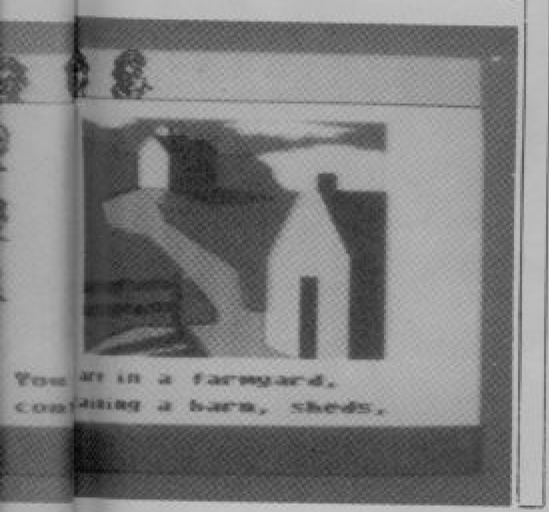
the volume up, and THINK FIEND while you try to outwit that most feared resident of Faringdon – *Beneath the Folly*!

- VOCABULARY 8 (Insulting)
- ATMOSPHERE 7 (Flatulent)
- PERSONAL 8 (Fiendish)
- VALUE 8 (Cheaper than thumbscrews)

ER

like the idea, then you should enjoy the game, for it's competently written, and performs well.

- VOCABULARY 7
- ATMOSPHERE 6
- PERSONAL 3
- VALUE 9



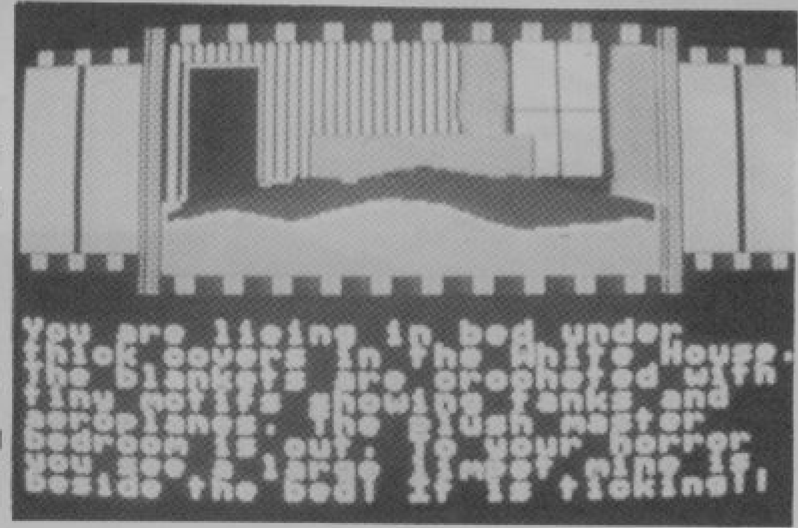
RONNIE GOES TO HOLLYWOOD

AUTHOR PROFILE
Michael White

Michael White got hooked on adventures when he bought a copy of *Velnor's Lair*, obtained by mail order years ago from Derek Brewster's software company. But what got him into writing adventures was what he still regards as his favourite adventure – Level 9's *Adventure Quest*.

Some four years ago Michael formed 8th Day Software, now with some 11 titles behind it. 8th Day first became known to the adventuring public with some of the very first Quilled adventures, in a series called *Games Without Frontiers*.

All 8th Day adventures are sold by mail order from his home. His most recent before *Ronnie Goes To Hollywood*, was *HRH*, with which he attempted to 'go commercial' and market the game through distributors. "It was the salesman in me, I suppose," said Michael.



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- REVIEWER: KEITH

"You are lying in bed under thick covers in the master bedroom of The White House. The blankets are crocheted with tiny motifs showing tanks and aeroplanes . . ."

Getting up, Ronnie notices that there is a limpet mine attached to his bed – better get out of here in a hurry! But where are his trousers?

Dressing has its hazards, since the trousers turn out to be down the corridor in Nancy's powder room – a naked security guard in a wardrobe hands them over. Stopping briefly to bath (must get rid of the rotten eggs thrown when he ventured onto the balcony!) Ronnie retrieves his toy submarine, puts on your surgical truss (enables him to carry more objects!) and heads downstairs for the press conference in the foyer.

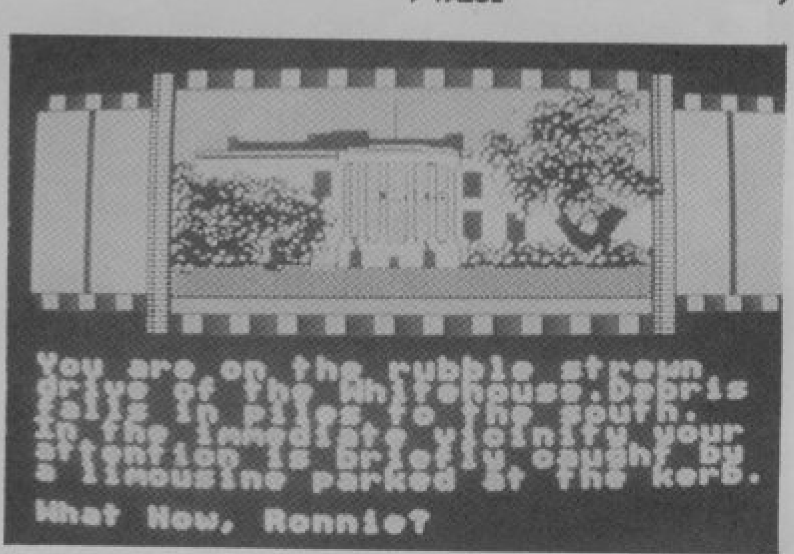
Unperturbed by the explosion upstairs that blows the top floor of the White House away, he reads his speech, and leaves to get on with the job of running the USA. What's your next move, Ron?

Ronnie Goes To Hollywood is an adventure in which you, as Ronnie, act very much along the lines of your Spitting Image. The opening sequence is a little confusing to play, since only when Ronnie is fully dressed will Nancy present you with the speech. This involves having a bath after you have been out onto the balcony with your trousers.

This is a graphics adventure, although there are only relatively few pictures. In addition to the pictures, a novel presentation system is used to operate the White House computer terminal.

Overall, here is a highly amusing adventure, well worth the £3.99 mail order asking price.

- VOCABULARY 7
- ATMOSPHERE 8
- PERSONAL 7
- VALUE 9



TOP TEN GRAFFITI COMPETITION



Here's what you've all been waiting months for — the three finalists of our C + VG/Top Ten graffiti competition.

First up was Nick Adams of Plymouth (who's been biting his nails in anticipation for the last three months). The second finalist to win his way through is Chris Green of Kent with his graffiti wall — all 72x8 feet of it. Anyone living in the Bexleyheath area has probably noticed this one already. The third and last finalist is Stephen Bain of Clacton on Sea — pretty impressive entry this one, and hand delivered to the offices.

So, what happens now? Well, Martin Maynard of Top Ten Software has the unenviable task of choosing the overall winner — who wins a trip to New York!

Watch out for next month's C + VG when we will bring you his decision.

▼ Chris Green

▼ Nick Adams

▼ Stephen Bain


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THE GOLDEN JOYSTICK



Time is running out for you to cast your votes for the 1987 Computer & Video Games Golden Joystick Awards.

The awards are now in their fifth year now — and are beyond question the best established and most widely respected computer awards in the world. There simply is nothing that comes near in America, or the rest of Europe.

What makes Joysticks special is that you — the C+VG readers and games buying public-vote for them. There is no reviewers influence — no arbitrary panel of judges — it's just the games you vote for and nothing else that will decide the winners.



This year the awards will be presented at the Kensington Roof Gardens in London. Celebrity presenter will be Chris Tarrant — former Tis Was host, general loony, and now presenter of Capital Radio's wacky morning radio show.

Everyone who is anyone in the games business will be at the awards. And so might you. One lucky voter and a friend will be invited to the awards presentation. You will meet The C+VG team, have your photograph taken with Chris Tarrant, enjoy the slap up meal at the awards, and we will also cover all your expenses for travelling to Joysticks. It is a day out of a lifetime.

There are also 10 runner up prizes of ex-review software. So Don't Delay, Vote Today. C+VG's Golden Joystick Awards is celebrating its fifth anniversary. For those of you still playing with He-Man, here is a complete history of the games business top awards ceremony.

THE CATEGORIES

Software House of the Year..........

Runner-up..........

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Runner-up..........

Adventure of the Year..........

Runner-up..........

Arcade Game of the Year..........

Runner-up..........

Strategy Game of the Year..........

Runner-up..........

Best Original Game..........

Runner-up..........

Programmer of the Year..........

Runner-up..........

Name.......... Age..........

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Computer Owned..........

The Computer + Video Games Golden Joystick Awards celebrate their Fifth Anniversary this year. Eugene Lacey looks back at five years of awards and offers you a chance to attend the event of the year in the computer gaming calendar.

AWARDS '87

5th Birthday

1984: The awards were presented by Dave Lee Travis at Moretons Club in London's Berkeley Square. Software House of the Year — **Ultimate** Game of the Year — **Jet Pac** by Ultimate. Best Arcade Style Game — **Manic Miner** by bug Byte. Best Strategy Game — **The Hobbit** — Melbourne House. Best Original Game — **Ah Diddums** — Imagine.

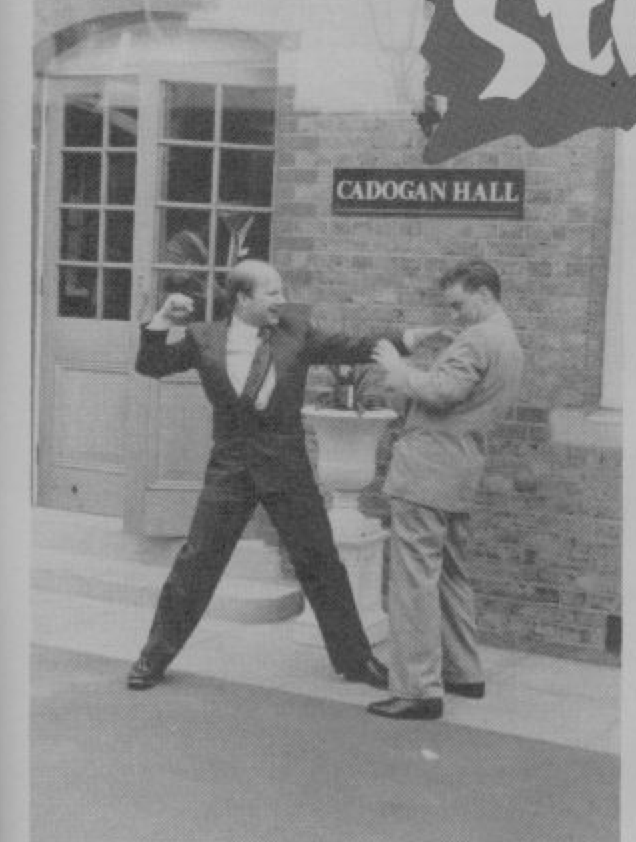
1985 heralded the beginning of the Jools era. The Tube's very own Mr Holland was to go on congratulating the winners for the next three years.

Software House of the Year was, once again **Ultimate.** Game of the Year was another double for Ultimate with — **Knightlore.** Best Original Game — **Elite** — by Acornsoft. Best Adventure Game — **Caymorgue Castle** by Adventure International. Best Arcade Style Game — **Daley Thompson's Dcathlon** — by Ocean. Best Strategy Game — **Lords of Midnight** — by Beyond.

1986 saw Joysticks take on a nautical flavour as software bosses and programmers boarded the Elizabethan for a cruise on the Thames. Game of the Year — **Way of the Exploding Fist** — by Melbourne House. Software House of the Year — **Melbourne House.** Best Original Game — **Little Computer People.** Best Adventure Game, **Red Moon** by Level 9. Best Strategy Game — **Theatre Europe** by PSS. Best Arcade Style Game — **Commando** by Elite. Programmer of the Year **Steve Crow.**



US Gold lift C&VG gold



▲ Gimmee back my joystick or . . .



▲ All smiles as Melbourne's Exploding Fist cleans up in '86



▲ Elite Go Gold in '87

1987 saw Joysticks return to dry land with the event switching to Cadogan Hall at the Duke of Yorks Barracks, London. US Gold picked up Game of the Year for **Gauntlet.** Software House of the Year — **Elite.** Programmer of the Year — **Andrew Braybrook.** Adventure of the Year **The Pawn** by Rainbird/Magnetic Scrolls. Strategy Game of the Year **Vietnam** by U.S. Gold, Arcade Game of the Year **Uridium** by Hewson. Best Original Game **Sentinel** by Firebird. Best Soundtrack **Sanxion** by Rob Hubbard for Thalimus.



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The "TOP GUN" game puts you in the pilot's seat of an F-14 jet fighter. 3-D vector graphics and split screen display allow one or two players to combat head to head or against the computer. Your armaments in this nerve-tingling aerial duel are heat seeking missiles and 20mm rapid fire cannon. Many skills have to be brought in to play such as reflexes, manoeuvring ability and accuracy to become the best of the best. "Top Gun" mavericks enter the danger zone!
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MEAN MACHINES

REVIEWS

The Games Consoles are finally getting the software they deserve!

This month Tony Takoushi takes a look at the hot new releases on the Sega and Nintendo and brings you an exclusive review of the incredible coin-op conversion of Afterburner.

● COMMANDO

As I promised you last month, here is a review of *Commando* on the Nintendo system. The game packaging says it is a 1 Megabyte cartridge, well I have played it all the way through (a little over seven hours on and off!) and I am certain it is not a megabyte, it should read one megabit (128K) as the graphics and sound are good BUT they are not THAT GOOD.

Commando closely follows its arcade master with similar screens, play and thumb wrenching action. There are 16 sections to conquer, split into four sections (with four messages to be read) each with four sub-sections. There is a two-player option and a continue to let you carry on play where you were killed. It has a full attract mode that demonstrates the play and a neat title screen.

Your character, Super Joe, has two basic weapons – a rifle (button A) and a limited supply of grenades (button B) but you can pick up extra grenades along the way. The game starts with you being flown into enemy territory by a helicopter (this is a real biggie and takes up about a third of the screen) you leap out and the battle commences. You have to run up a vertically scrolling screen shooting and bombing just about everything in sight. The enemy soldiers attack from all sides, they filter in from the sides, they can be hiding in trenches, be lodged in gun towers high above you, come streaming out of barracks, zoom in on motorbikes or lorries.

There are bullets flying all over the place and you HAVE TO keep moving to stay alive (my kind of game . . .), bullets disappear after travelling a set range, so no trailing bullets to follow you all the way up the screen.

The terrain is pretty much the same with simple colour changes as you progress through the levels. There are trees, rivers, bridges – these can be real dodgy to negotiate, so do not be nervous – and boulders to name a few. Hostages give extra points and can be found either above or below ground. To get below you have to lob a few grenades around to expose ladders you have to clamber down, once down there are all sorts of goodies just begging to be picked up, but watch out for sentries and a sneaky snake.

If you are feeling brave you can earn Colonel's Stripes for killing an enemy Colonel in an underground bunker, or Lieutenant Stripes for doing the same to a Lieutenant.

This is a very fast game and not for those with a delicate disposition.

● **Capcom's Commando makes a successful move to the Nintendo.**



● TRANSBOT

Transbot is a version of the classic *Defender* by Williams. You play on a left to right scrolling backdrop and have to shoot aliens which attack in various inertial patterns. The scenario has you battling through a city to finally reach an underground fortress where *THE BIG ONE* happens and you get to fight it out with Elgramzon.

There are two gauges that need to be watched, a power gauge which decreases every time you are hit by an alien (you lose a life if it hits zero) and an arm gauge which counts down every time you fire. You can arm your ship from a choice of six weapons by first shooting an arms van that trundles in every so often on the bottom of the screen. If you then catch the pod as it leaves you can choose a weapon from the display. The six weapons are Normal/Beam/Sword/Cannon/Diffuse Beam and Two-way fire.

Graphics are pin-sharp and there are some twisty/turny attack patterns hidden away in the higher levels.

▶ GRAPHICS	7
▶ SOUND	6
▶ PLAYABILITY	6
▶ OVERALL	7



● WORLD GRAND PRIX

Along with *Hang On*, this is the business when it comes to racing games. There is plenty of challenge with 12 courses to choose from, three difficulty levels and an edit mode that allows you to design your own tracks.

Presentation is similar to *Pole Position*, with dangers that include road signs and other drivers. Superb detail on the cars and backdrops makes it a joy to watch.

▶ GRAPHICS	7
▶ SOUND	7
▶ PLAYABILITY	7
▶ OVERALL	8

● W G

HANG ON

The other motorbike offering this month is the other arcade classic *Hang On*. This is absolute dynamite. As a conversion it is silky-smooth and action packed.

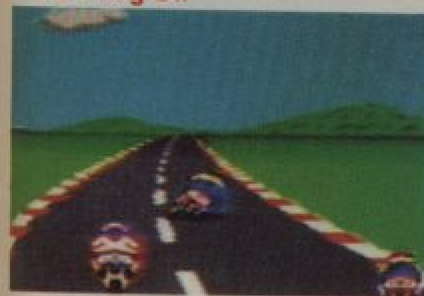
You have three gears and switch between them by using the up and down on the pad — this can be frustratingly dodgy to start with as you can change gear while taking bends unintentionally. There are five stages to cover: circuit, seaside, monument valley, city night and circuit again. Each stage is four kilometres long and has to be completed in the time specified.

If you hit any road signs or racers, you lose a life. Any spare time is carried forward to the next stage and you score for bikers passed.

This is a must for anybody into racing games. Check it out.

▸ GRAPHICS	7
▸ SOUND	7
▸ PLAYABILITY	8
▸ OVERALL	8

● Hang On



● Transbot



● World Grand Prix.



● Enduro Racer



ENDURO RACER

Enduro Racer is a conversion of the arcade game in the true sense of the word. It is not a true on-the-bike view, instead Sega has opted for a diagonally scrolling Zaxxon type approach. Initially I was disappointed after seeing the conversion of *Enduro Racer*. I figured they could at least come close on play and presentation.

Enduro Racer is a ten stage game with five basic scenes (country track/ruins/red desert/marshland and mountain roads), which are repeated with a shorter time span to make up the ten — 60 secs first time round with 50 secs on tracks 6-10.

You can enhance your bike by passing as many cars and bikes as you can along the course, these are totted up at the end of each stage and you are placed in the tune up screen. Here you can choose from accelerator, handling, tyres, engine, suspension and items which decreases your damage rating.

The play is fast and challenging and the only real problem, and it is a biggy, is that your ability to turn left and right is very sluggish. There is the ability to pick up better handling off the tune up screen.

▸ GRAPHICS	6
▸ SOUND	6
▸ PLAYABILITY	5
▸ OVERALL	7

NEWS TIPS

● Afterburner is due out for the Sega and new barriers are set to be broken as it should be a four MEGABIT CARTRIDGE (that is 500,000 bytes to you!) Graphically it should be pretty amazing (see the preview pic of the Sega cart below).

● Fantasy Zone 2 is a two megabit cart for the Sega and should be heading in your direction next month. Other Sega gems include Kung Fu, Zillion 2, SDI and Rescue Mission, these are scheduled for release in early 1988.



● S.D.I.

● You have played the arcade game, bought the Sega cartridge, listened to the album, tape or compact disc, tinkered with the plastic toy AND NOW you can watch THE VIDEO!! Yes folks you can now buy videos of your favourite arcade games, the first titles covered are After Burner, Hang On, Super Hang On and Enduro Racer (see pic).

● Next month I'll be reviewing *Zaxxon 3-D* is due for release quite soon and I have seen a prototype version. You had better start polishing those 3-D glasses as this game rates as the best 3-D game to date.

I have also got finished Fantasy Zone 2 (two megabit) and Kung Fu Kid (one megabit) carts, reviews to follow soon.

The other prototype carts to arrive in the UK are Zillion 2, SDI, Combat and Rescue and Alien Syndrome.

● 3D Zaxxon



My word you lot are keeping me busy!

My postman is about to go on strike because of the amount of mail you are sending me (keep sending it, I never really liked him anyway!!) there seems to be a heavy bias at the moment to Sega, and despite little coverage in recent months it will change! I have had a few problems getting carts for it but that has been sorted.

The most popular cart at the moment seems to be Outrun (I do not blame you, IT IS HOT), the top score of over 45 million is going to take some beating.

Mike Donnelly is confused as to which system to go for, sorry Mike it really is a case of horses for courses, there is not a clear cut favourite especially as the new Nintendo stuff is about to start entering the UK.

Special thanks must go to Robin for sending me some JUICY tips, not forgetting the Wonderboy himself Glenn Black and MY Kung Fu Master George Wade.

If you should be having problems finding Sega carts then pay your local Woolies/Smiths/Menzies/Toys R Us/and Virgin stores a visit.

OK! now for the tips and there are some real beauts this month.

SPACE HARRIER — there is a secret screen hidden in the sound test part of the game (see the manual for entry) first select the UR-7-4-3-7-4-8-1 and this puts you in the secret screen.

You can also get unlimited lives on Space Harrier by pressing xxxxxxxxxxx on the game over screen.

QUARTET — to access the sound test press pause four times and press player 1 on the second player pad while the title screen comes up (on power up). You can select sound through pad 1. To get wide beam at game start press the pause button 14 times and then press #1 on the control pad on the title screen.

CHOPLIFTER — On the title screen press up/down/left/right and press #1 on the control pad, repeat the process for the next screen.

MEAN MACH

Something wonderful is happening in computer games. The home versions are appearing. Suddenly everyone is talking about Sega and Nintendo and it is not surprising with such top notch games as Afterburner appearing . . .

This is it.

This is the big one.

Sega's *Afterburner* is here for the Sega Master System and it is driving me MAD!

Do not, I repeat, *do not* read the following review or your life will not be worth living if your local shop has sold out of this game, Afterburner is absolutely brilliant. Sega has caught the essence, THE SHEER GUTS, of the arcade version in a megabit cartridge.

Afterburner, as you probably know, is the latest mind-blowing arcade flight simulator to emerge from those Japanese arcade masters Sega. You have to take your enemy fighter through 18 battle scenes and land on an aircraft carrier on completion of the mission.

The prototype cartridge I reviewed has a full title screen with the logo in big letters shifting off the screen to show a couple of pics of a fighter in mid air and a technician giving the OK for launch. You are then treated to a full demo of level one.

On pressing the fire button, the launch sequence is shown. The game places your fighter on the deck of an aircraft carrier then it slowly accelerates upwards into the sky as a voice commands you to 'Get Ready', as the ship falls away under you.

The screen changes to a sea scenario and you are shown the stage number (1-18), lives left and score. Control is fairly simple with up/down/left/right and diagonals. The key to good *Afterburning* is knowing when to pull up to avoid missiles, and how to use the 360 degree roll.

You have two weapons to take out enemy – machine gun and missiles. Machine gun is unlimited in supply but missiles are limited and you can top up your supply at various points throughout the game. To fire the machine gun, you simply press button two, missiles have to lock-on to a target in their display zone on screen before launch can occur – timing is vital.

To complete a level you have to survive a set time period, and making it darn near impossible are the enemy fighters which stream in from all around the screen.

You can lock these suckers in your sights and blow 'em away with some really cool moves *BUT* it does take time to master the key moves.

There are different fighters and patterns of attack, some come at you launching homing missiles which are hard to shake off, others come in from the left and right. There is also a fighter which almost somersaults at you while firing and quickly flying up off the top of the screen.

You lose one of your three

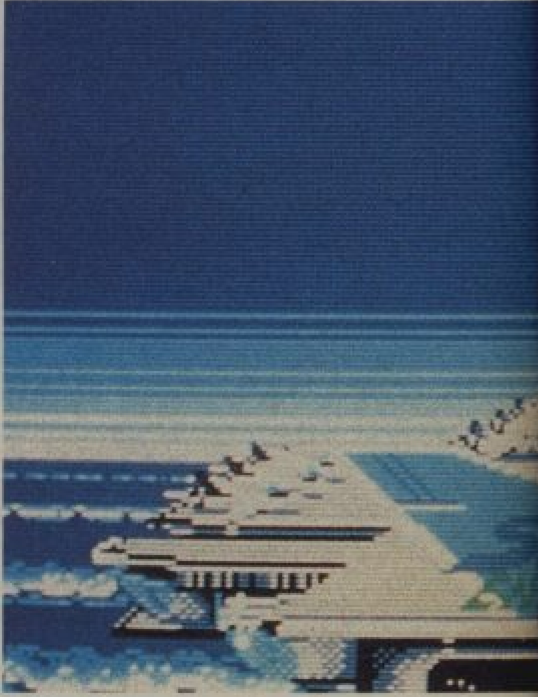
AFTERB



● *A night bomber is in your sights – and Takoushi lets him have it.*



● *Swirling, swerving, Afterburner – it'll take your breath away.*



● *Your fighter takes off from the good ship Sega.*

lives if you're hit by a fighter or its missiles. The destruction scene for death by missile is impressive. It's an exact copy of the arcade scene where you plummet down towards the ground with a plume of smoke piling out behind before hitting the ground with an explosion.

The terrain below you varies between sea, forest, arctic tundra and desert.

You can make your fighter do a 360 degree roll with the whole screen rolling around you – it is a mind-blowing horizon tilt. It is like picking up your brain and rolling it thru 360 degrees.

BURNER



● *Afterburner – one cartridge to give Sega a much needed boost.*

I did find a rather large hole in the play as you could play through levels one to twelve simply by holding the joystick in any of the four diagonals and missiles and fighters simply missed you. I assume this will not be possible in the finished version!

If you survive the first three scenes you get to refuel your fighter and load up with more missiles. This can be a tricky manoeuvre as you have to position the fuel cable from a tanker plane into your missile sight and then trigger it. You also get a hit count and points summary every three stages, so the more fighters you take out the higher your points tally.

At the end of stage six you get to battle a huge back-fire bomber which lobs missiles at your plane. You have to dodge and weave away while trying to take it out. If you succeed, you are given a landing sequence where a tanker refuels the fighter and you zoom off back into the sky again.

It is very fast to play and may, at first, prove a little confusing because of its speed. The graphics are generally sharp and smooth although I must say I was surprised with the general standard as it is a 500,000 byte cartridge and I did expect a lot more of the graphics.

The trouble with producing home versions of such graphically stunning arcade games is that it's almost impossible to reproduce an exact copy of the arcade machine. In many respects comparisons are worthless.

Nevertheless Sega has done an excellent job on *Afterburner*, it is the first in a new generation of console games.

Afterburner couldn't have hit at a better time for Sega. With Nintendo blowing their company trumpet about having shifted millions more systems than Sega – the quick conversion of what is definitely the coin-op of the moment is bound to give Sega a boost.

Nintendo are so boastful about their dominance right now that they staged a mock boxing match at a lavish press do in Las Vegas recently . . . Kid Nintendo versus the Sega Cissy. No prizes for guessing who won – but our guess is that *Afterburner* represents a fair old punch back by Sega.

Don't miss it!

- ▶ **GRAPHICS** 8
- ▶ **SOUND** 7
- ▶ **PLAYABILITY** 9
- ▶ **OVERALL** 9

TONY TAKOUSHI



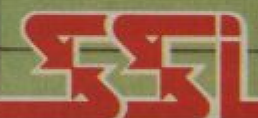
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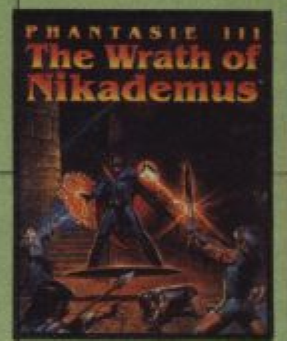


● *Head to head – as Takoushi yells "eat photon death".*

SSI STANDS OUT FROM THE CROWD

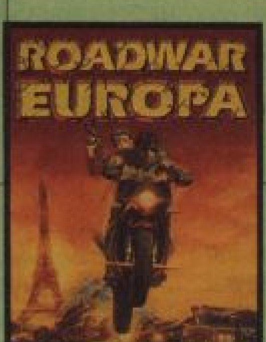
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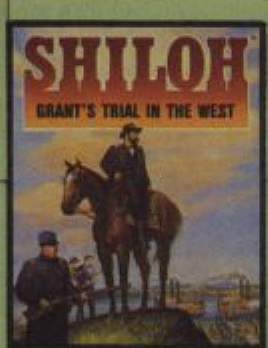
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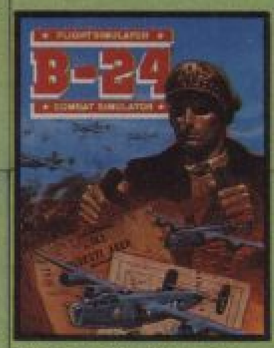
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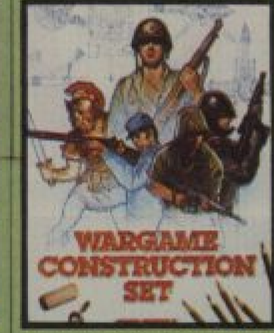
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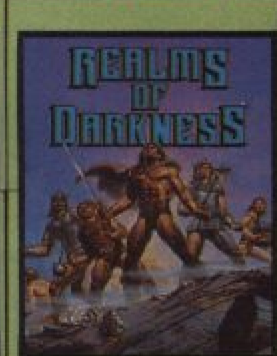
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MAILBAG

THE FINAL CUT!

●Please, please, please, please, please, please, please, please could you NOT put competitions on a page that has got something good on the back (e.g.) reviews advertisements & others. This is because I HATE cutting out competitions like that. I do not want to cut the world's best computer magazine up to shreads. Why don't you put them on a pull-out page or something?
Spiros Spyrou
London, N9

A DISAPPEARING ART!

●Whatever happened to Frame UP. I really liked that section and had sent in several tapes with my own work. Is it lost forever or will you be bringing this section back? It's one of the main bits of C+VG where readers can get really involved.
John Constable,
Suffolk
Editor's reply: Frame Up is being rested for a while. But don't worry you'll be able to join the frame game again in the near future.

FRAMED UP

●OK, C+VG what have you done with it? No *Frame Up* in last month's issue? What's going on?

I was really upset not to see it there. It is my favourite part of the magazine and the first page I turn to when my new issue arrives.

I hope this is not the end for *Frame Up*, as this is the only page in the magazine where readers can try their hand a producing stunning artwork on the computer. I am a keen computer artist myself and have always thought about sending a frame into C+VG. I have several ranging from Marilyn Monroe to sports cars that are easily as good as some of the pictures published in the past.

I feel strongly that beginners should have somewhere to show their efforts. After all, some of the amazing screen shots that are now being published are produced by people who had to start somewhere. Anyway, don't you think C+VG is going to get really boring if it is just packed full of page after page of reviews? I don't know what other readers think but I want more than just a buyers guide from my magazine.
Pete Jones,
Birmingham.
Editor's reply: Relax Peter, Frame Up is just taking a month off. It'll be back in April, and that's a promise.

SEGA SOCCER SENSATIONS

●I am writing to tell you about my favourite soccer game. I used to be hooked on *International Soccer* which I played on the Commodore.

My friend Mike and I used to play it all the time, he is a West Ham fan and thus always got beat (Probably because West Ham fans know nothing about football).

I bought a SEGA system at Christmas and have found a totally brill' soccer game. It's called *World Soccer*. You boys don't seem to have found out about it yet!

If the soccer gets too boring (If you are playing a QPR fan) you play penalties which is good fun. Also if the game ends in a draw, due to Hoddle missing an open goal, it goes to a penalty shoot out.

The only problem is that the game has world sides. It would be much more fun to see Arsenal 5 — Tottenham 0 (a fairly average result for the Gunners), than seeing England beating Japan.

So come on you guys, get wise, let all the football fans know about this game it's the best thing on the SEGA since *Space Harrier* and *Rocky*.
David Adams
Highbury, London.

IT'S NOT A CRIME!

●I would like to register my disagreement with Caroline Forrest who wrote into C+VG last month to complain about *It's A Crime*.

I have not played *It's A Crime*, I will say that straight away but neither has Caroline Forrest judging from her letter.

What I disagree with is the statement: "The fact that this is fantasy rather than reality does not make it potentially any less dangerous."

What absolute nonsense. "No difference between fantasy and reality." It is my opinion that the inability to make this distinction is what is truly dangerous. I have played many fantasy games ranging from dungeon and dragon type of games to Napoleonic war games. I fail to see how this is going to turn me into some sort of homicidal maniac.

There is in fact a strong opinion that by providing a form of escape or relaxation that this type of hobby makes you less inclined towards anti-social behaviour.
Steve Earl
Bradley.

CONSOLE WARS

●After a lot of dithering about whether to trade in my Spectrum for a Sega or Nintendo, I finally made up my mind at Christmas. Nintendo got my cash but it was a close thing. What do you think will happen with the video consoles this year and did I make the right choice?
John Simmonds,
Wormley,
Herts.
Editor's reply: We think the Mean Machines will be really big this year. Sega probably have the best games out at the moment but expect Nintendo to come out fighting with some big titles, including Mike Tyson's Punch-Out this spring. Whatever machine you buy will provide you with good entertainment. And as you've picked the Nintendo make sure you get Super Mario Brothers. It's brill.

WHAT A FREAK!

●I am a 16-year-old computer enthusiast. I talk, sleep, live and breath computers. I have no interest in anything unless it involves a micro chip.

On average I spend at least five hours every evening glued to the computer monitor playing the latest games. *Outrun* is my current fave although I must admit I was dissapointed with it.

My mum and dad think it's a unhealthy way for a young lad to spend all his spare time playing games and my friends call me a freak because I don't go out, date girls, go to the pictures or indulge in

socially unacceptable behaviour in bus shelters or telephone kiosks.

I think I'm all right and completely normal. What do you lot at C+VG think? Please don't print my name or address in case my friends or family happen to read it.

Anonymous,
Somewhere in the United Kingdom.

Editor's reply: Well Johnny Williams, of 432, The Lane, Lower Pudsey, the vote goes against you. We all think you're a bit of a freak and a complete waste of space. Keep buying the mag, though.

GREAT GOLDEN JOYSTICK FIX!

●So, it's that time of the year again! What am I talking about? The Golden Joysticks Awards. Ha! More like the great Golden Joystick Fix!! Have any other readers noticed that year after year the same companies appear in the roll of honour. Are the companies that pay you the most — or is it to make sure you get their adverts for the next year?

You say it's us, the readers, who decide who wins, well if that's the case how come you don't have any readers representing the magazine at the "prestigious" ceremony?

Another thing — you have not changed the categories in all the year's that you've been running it. Shouldn't you take into account the 16 bit market. What about consoles? You could even have a category for 'best overall category'. Why don't you ask us round about autumn and we could give you a few suggestions.

One final point. Do you think that we really believe that you judge each and every entry form?

Simon Gall,
Worthing.

Editor's reply: Point one, the awards are not fixed. All your votes count. You make some good points about new categories and we'll be thinking about those for next year. We do, in fact, add up all the votes — twice to make sure everything is correct.

HIGH SCORE PORKIES

●I just want to say that the Arcade Action supplement on the front cover of last month's issue was totally brilliant.

I couldn't believe some of those high scores though. I myself am a pretty mean *Alien Syndrome* player — having spent easily £10-£20 on the game over the last few weeks. It's got so that I have to take a different bus home on the way back from my Saturday job — or I arrive home penniless. Getting back to those scores though — just how did 'EGG' of Portsmouth clock up 775,500 on *Alien Syndrome*. That's a good 200,000 better than my best score — and I am the best player I know in our local arcade. My high score has never been wiped to my knowledge.

If EGG really does exist and really has clocked up this mega-score I'd love to know how he did it.

How about sending in some tips, EGG? It would be helping out a fellow *Alien Syndrome* nut.

George Kanopolus
Crystal Rooms
London.

PS. Any news on an *Alien Syndrome* for the 64 yet?

Editor's reply: Good and bad news George. yes *Alien Syndrome* will be appearing later this year on the Edge label but I am afraid we have been unable to contact the mysterious EGG. Your letter is our last hope.

YUK AND POOH

●Alright C+VG, you've gone too far this time. First of all you knock sexy, beautiful, intelligent Melissa on the head without so much as a bye or leave.

As if that was not enough — and just as I am getting used to life without Melissa what confronts me in the February issue of C+VG — but the ugliest slimy pair of deformed aliens ever dreamt of. I mean they have absolutely no endearing features. Shuk looks like some sort of geriatric Elephant Man from planet Godknowswot and as for Doode — well — car lights with a punk hair style.

I could have put up with the ugliness of the pair if it had at least have been a good story. So far all we are told is that Shuk and Doode are somehow spirited into the world by some idiot casting a spell by mistake one night in a flat in Finchley. If either of the authors had ever been to Finchley they would know that about the most exciting thing that ever happens there is the changing of the traffic lights. OK, the bit where they fall onto a VW Golf and crush it was OK — especially when Shuk pinned the car badge trendily on his chest. But how comes they crushed the motor. What are they made of? Lead.

Sorry C+VG — this strip is not for me. Shuk and Doode or Yuk and Pooh, I know what I think.

John Peters,
Finchley, London.

Editor's reply: I'd make sure your windows and doors are locked at nights if I were you, John.

CRAPPY COUPONS

●I am writing to complain about the layout of your magazine dated Feb' 88. Specifically about the two competitions, one on page 89, the other on page 90.

How were we readers supposed to enter both competitions, when after cutting out the coupon on page 89, you would have left yourself with only half a coupon on page 90. Fortunately I noticed that this would occur, before I started cutting.

I then decided to just write the necessary details needed for the Pirate competition on a post-card, thus enabling me to use the coupon on page 90.

But to fill in this coupon it appears that we all need to own a white inked biro, because of the intelligently coloured background for the page. This same sort of problem also occurs during your many features/articles, when on a red background you place orange or green lettering, making it difficult to read.

Well anyway, keep up the good mag, (apart from the layout), it's great value for a £1, as the specialist magazine for my computer has upped its price to £1.25 but still only averages around 63 pages per issue, on that topic how about more reviews for Electron/BBC games.

Paul Shand
Consett
Co. Durham

Editor's reply: Er, it was an intelligence test. You passed, Paul. Well done.

CARTOON CHAOS

●Hurrah, the bugs are dead at last! Even Melissa's gone, kidnapped by *Shuk and Doode*, the exciting new charactes in *C+VG*. Mind you, I pity them stuck with that old bag. The tired old hasbeen will probably bore them to death talking about nothing but pokes, etc. Maybe they are forcing her to have a well needed face lift . . .

The new strip is brilliant. At last an eighties cartoon strip from a new artist who can draw, and write a decent story.

Garry Bottomly
Tottenham

P.S. I think Spurs are brilliant

Editor's reply: Who are Spurs?



CoMiX

How "mature" are you? "For mature readers" is a label seen more and more often nowadays on American comic-books. It's a reaction by the comic publishers to a fear that some of their stronger material (sex, violence, bad language and other sure-fire sales gimmicks) will come under the scrutiny of the self-appointed moral crusaders running rampage in America today.

Some comic companies, it seems, have panicked at the idea of their comics being censored, and so have tried to introduce their own system of advisory "ratings". Hence "for mature readers", the comic-book equivalent of an X-certificate (though you're not likely to see it on the X-Men!).

Not everybody in the comics business is quite so convinced about the need for a ratings system to stop adult material getting into childish hands. For instance, when DC announced that its books would carry advisory ratings, four of the best-known names in comics replied that in that case they wouldn't be doing any more new work for DC. The four were Frank Miller, Alan Moore, Howard Chaykin (see last month's *C+VG)* and Mary Wolfman; DC subsequently backed down.

It's a stupid argument, of course. Everyone's got their own standards as to what's acceptable and what isn't. And you might well ask, who are *they* to tell me what I can and can't read?

Red herring or not, though, it's a reminder that you're never too old for comics – or, put it another way, there's more to comics than just superheroes. As I've said before in this column, comics is a medium where you can tell any kind of story for any kind of audience. That fact is gradually sinking in – with both publishers and the reading public.

Not that there's anything wrong with the ideas of superheroes – and there's some wonderful work being done there right now. But there's also some genuinely "mature" ("for mature readers", remember?) non-superhero storytelling going on.

For instance, you'll find "adult" themes and artistic sophistication in these:

● *Love & Rockets* (book one, £5.95, published by Titan Books; book two out soon). I must immediately declare a prejudice: I think this book is a masterpiece. It's the work of Jaime Hernandez who, along with brothers Gilbert and Mario, produces a wonderful comic magazine called *Love & Rockets*, from which the stories in this volume are reprinted.

It's described by the publishers as "The hilarious adventures of Maggie,











Hopey and their friends as they endure the perils of post-punk romance. Dark glasses, cars, dieting, lady wrestling, mechanics, sex, rockets, heartaches, rock and roll and happiness in the nuclear age."

If you're still reading after that, and haven't yet dashed out to procure a copy, let me add that Jaime Hernandez masterfully blends earthily realistic dialogue with economic but irresistable drawings to create a cast of characters you can't help but care about – Maggie and Hopey in particular. As you progress through the book you find yourself sharing their mundane day-to-day concerns while feeling slightly disorientated by some of the background details – the existence of dinosaurs in their world, for instance, and Maggie's expertise as, of all things, a rocket engineer.

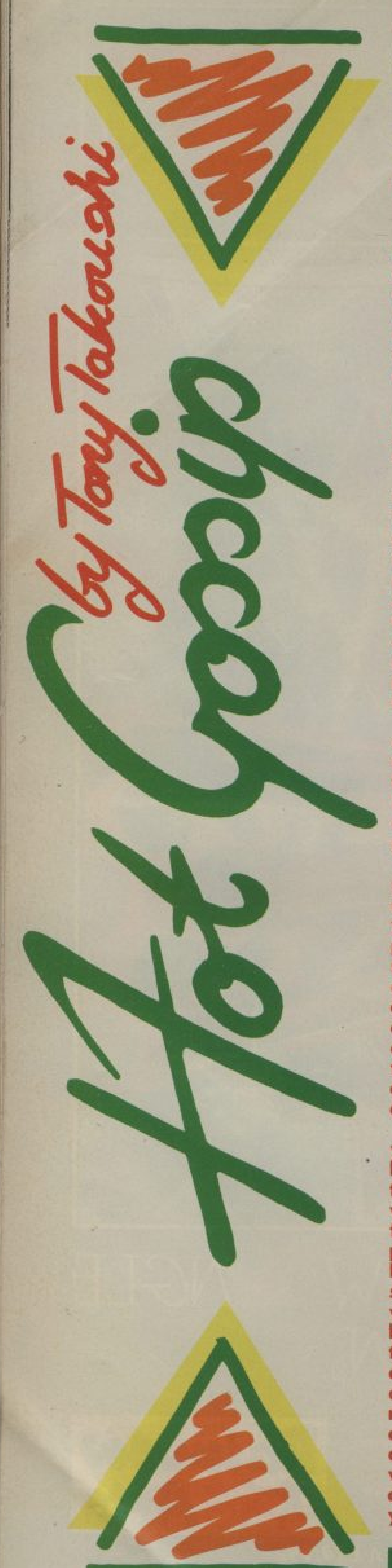
Reading this back, I suspect that I've failed to convey the flavour of *Love & Rockets* in the slightest. So you'll just have to accept my recommendation: buy this book or be seriously unfulfilled.

● *Heartbreak Soup* (Titan Books, £5.95). In a way, this is a companion volume to *Love & Rockets* – it's reprinted from the same magazine and is entirely the work of another Hernandez brother, Gilbert. (The two books are attractively designed by Rian Hughes to look like a uniform edition.)

Gilbert's work sits neatly alongside Jaime's, but on closer examination it is a more complex blend. The ubiquitous Alan Moore remarks in the introduction that the influences of both Japanese and European comics are visible here. And the subject matter is far more relentlessly "normal" than Jaime's semi-fantasy world. It might seem strange to speak of life in an



impoverished Mexican village as "normal" (unless that happens to be where you live, of course), but that's the effect of Gilbert's technique. By writing, as it were, in a dull monotone he makes us accept his funny-looking cartoony characters as absolutely real.



Loud and proud and ready to shock. Yes, C+VG's very own Mr T — Tony Takoushi — is back to rant and rave about computer games. Love or hate him, just read him.

This month's hot game is *Salamander* on the MSX. It is a 128K cartridge and has a dedicated sound chip. It is scheduled for release in March and should retail for around £20.

After *Nemesis* and *Nemesis II*, *Salamander* had to be something special!

Well it is! The trouble is that it is TOO special. The two *Nemesis* games followed on from each other in play and difficulty, *Salamander* offers new challenges, deeper play and better graphics — the only problem is that it is a real SWINE to play.

Like the arcade version it is fast, mean and unless you are familiar with the *Nemesis* games you will find this hard going.

It is a very polished game with a full attract mode giving you a storyline with piccies and jazzy music. There is a choice of play with ordinary one player, co-operative two player or Exchange which is a two player option with each playing alternatively.

Going into the game you have a little launch sequence and then you are faced with the first of the five basic stages. The play switches between horizontal and vertical scrolling backdrops, what takes this game beyond *Nemesis* is that there is always a different technique and understanding needed every minute or so. The terrain and aliens attack every which way and you are constantly reassessing your movements.

Because of the numerous scenes and techniques I will give you a smattering of most of the levels, scene one has you on a horizontally scrolling backdrop taking out strings of aliens, you then have to take out alien bases on either side of you which release jellyfish nasties which float towards you.

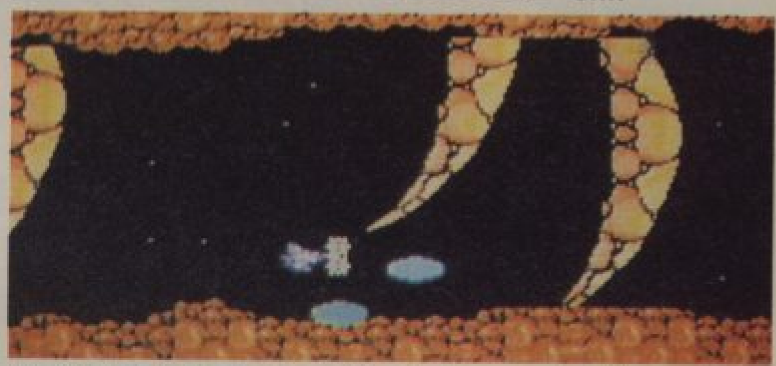
there are the huge sabre like blades to contend with. These drop from the top and bottom of the screen, they act like gates and you have to position yourself between them to avoid contact. You then have to shoot a path through the regenerating pink bubbles without geting squashed.

Scene two is a vertical scroll with alien platforms, boulders, rock ledges, gravity dropping aliens and an asteroid minefield to negotiate.

Scene three is



▲ Salamander is a fast furious blast 'em.


▲ Salamander is a worthy follow-up to Nemesis.

Throughout the game you can collect pods which allow you to arm up your ship with two-way bullets, ripple laser, laser and force field.

One of the nastier elements are the arms which swing out from the top and bottom of the screen enclosing you. You must take these out by shooting the blue bit of its body.

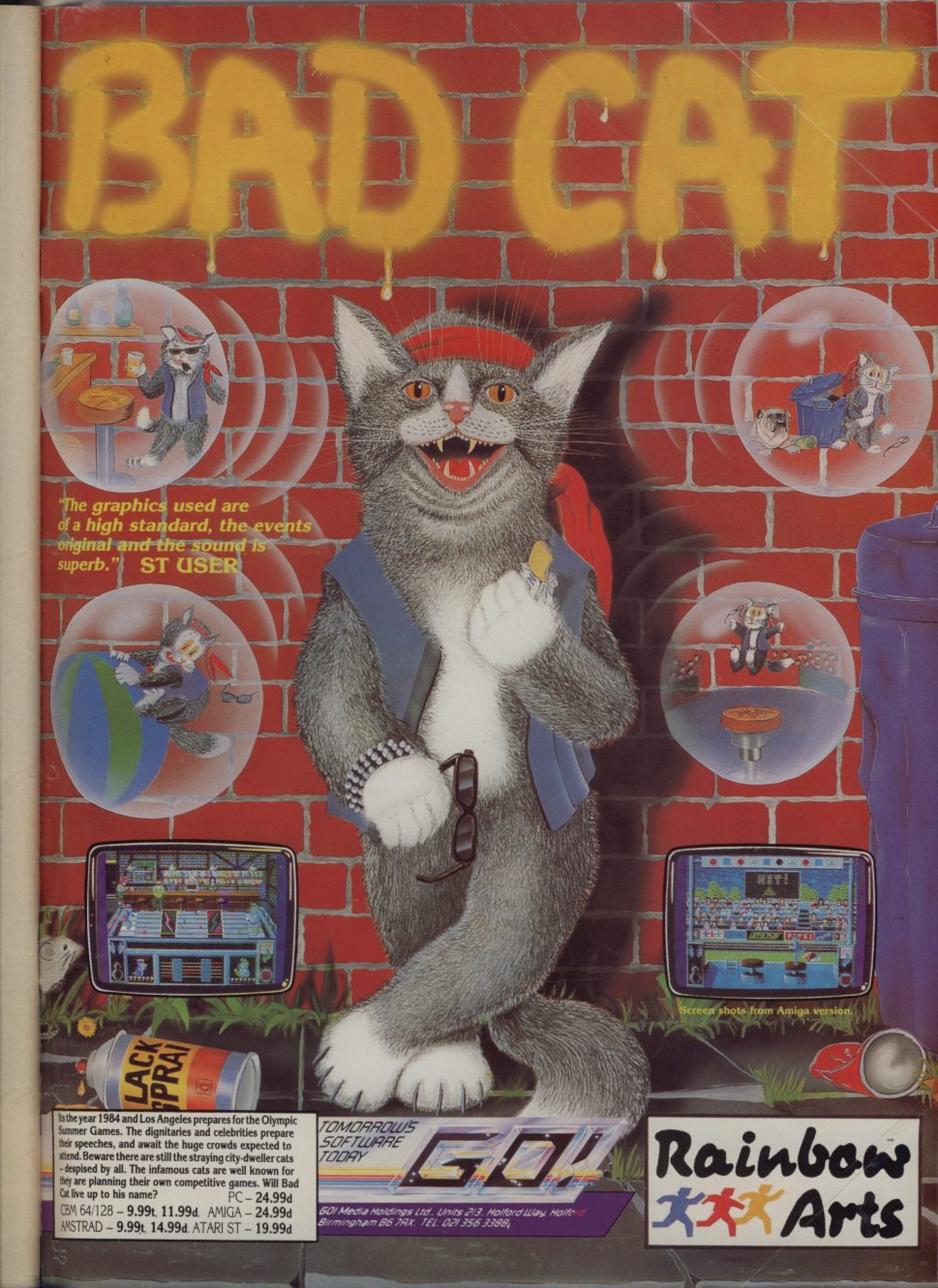
At the end of this the screen drops vertically and you have to fight your way through a mass of bullet spitting boulders into a cavern which in turn leads to a misty blue bottle-neck tunnel.

Once through here

another vertical scroll with strings of aliens to shoot, platforms, left and right passageways and boulder gushing valleys.

Scene four take you back to a horizontal scroll with snake like chains of aliens attacking, fast patterns of aliens speeding in and a one sided planet with wide beam lasers firing up at you.

Scene five has a horizontal scroll with a double sided planet which looks like something out of Fantastic Voyage with weird brain cell like backdrops and bases.


BAD CAT
"The graphics used are of a high standard, the events original and the sound is superb." ST USER
HIT!
BLACK SPRAI
Screen shots from Amiga version.
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